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MAGICAL REALISM AND THE FANTASTIC:
RESOLVED VERSUS UNRESOLVED ANTINOMY

by

Ⓒ AMARYLL BEATRICE CHANADY

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
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ABSTRACT

Both the fantastic and magical realism require active reader participation in the "game" of fiction. In the case of the fantastic, the reader succumbs to the disconcertment produced by contradictory logical codes in the text, and the frisson of the inexplicable. In magical realism, he reconstructs two antinomic codes and attempts to integrate them on the same ontological level, in spite of the fact that one of them could be dismissed as superstition or hallucination. Although the fantastic and magical realism are two distinct literary modes, they have certain similar characteristics. Coherently developed codes of the natural and the supernatural are essential; otherwise the narratives enter the domain of the oneiric or the absurd. In both modes, the reader is aware of the antinomy between the two world views, but whereas, in the fantastic, he is disturbed by the ostensibly conflicting logical codes, the reader of a magico-realist narrative must abandon his usual perspective of reality and adopt one in which the natural and the supernatural are part of a single interpretative code. Finally, authorial reticence prevents the reader from analysing the fictitious world from his customary point of view. In the fantastic, he is disturbed by apparently supernatural events in which he does not believe, because the narrator does not explain them unambiguously. If he did, the events would be perceived either as

supernatural and acceptable within the fictitious world, or as logically possible and compatible with a rational perspective. The narrative would then be an example of the marvellous, such as the fairy tale or fantasy fiction, or of a realistic work in which dreams, hallucinations and superstitions are described and explained. In magical realism, an intruding author would emphasize the difference between the two conflicting codes, by explaining what the reader must simply accept. An unusual world view can only be presented as credible if presented without comment by a narrator with an obviously different perspective. Although the reader is always aware of the ambiguity of an educated narrator recounting and authenticating superstition and fantasy, he can adopt the characters' point of view if the author appears to remain invisible.

We reach this hypothesis after discussing literary critics and scholars such as Caillois, Todorov, Bessière, Flores and González Echevarría, and demonstrate its applicability by analysing a restricted corpus of contemporary Spanish American prose fiction and adducing several examples of the two literary modes from European narrative.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ABSTRACT iv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT vi

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION 4

The Fantastic 4
Magical Realism 21

CHAPTER TWO

THE NATURAL VERSUS THE SUPERNATURAL 37

The Role of the Implied Reader, Narrator, Focalizer and Implied Author 37
The Natural and the Supernatural in Magical Realism 47
The Natural and the Supernatural in the Fantastic 65

CHAPTER THREE

TWO TYPES OF ANTINOMY 79

The Fantastic 79
Magical Realism 114

CHAPTER FOUR

AUTHORIAL RETICENCE 136

The Fantastic 138
Magical Realism 167

CONCLUSION 180

NOTES 185

BIBLIOGRAPHY 200

CURRICULUM VITAE 208

INTRODUCTION

Every reader of literature interprets the literary text on the basis of information he has acquired from previous reading, and according to norms he has established, either consciously or not, with regard to a work of literature. As Jonathan Culler reminds us in Structuralist Poetics, "To read a text as literature is not to make one's mind a tabula rasa and approach it without preconceptions; one must bring to it an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for."[1] This "literary competence", or ability to situate a text within a particular framework, is essential to the understanding of that work. The reader must have developed a number of codes, or series of interpretative rules, which he applies to every text he encounters. In the case of literary genres, the reading codes are usually well defined, and allow the reader to react to a text such as a comedy or a tragedy in a certain way. Literary modes, on the other hand, can often overlap, and are found in different genres. Two of the most confusing are the fantastic and magical realism, whose rules are understood in so many different ways that the terms are used almost indiscriminately. In Cuentos fantásticos argentinos, we find an apocalyptic story about a deluge of fire ("La lluvia de fuego"), an occultist account of mind projection ("En memoria de Paulina"), an ironic fairy tale ("Un cuento de duendes"), a fable ("El cuervo del arca"), as well as stories which we would consider examples of the fantastic or magical realism.[2] Can such a heterogenious body of literature be grouped within one category without the total loss of significance of the term classifying these works? Obviously, a definition like that proposed by Jacqueline Held does not help the reader understand the fantastic. According to her, the term can be applied to

> toute oeuvre dans laquelle thématique, situation, atmosphère, langage même, ou tout cela ensemble, nous introduiront dans un monde autre que celui de la perception commune, différent, étranger. . . .[3]

The concept of magical realism is no less vague to most readers and critics and it is frequently applied to any work that departs slightly from the depiction of conventional reality. While some scholars, such as Angel Flores,[4] simply equate magical realism with the fantastic, others see it as a particular attitude towards reality. Luis Leal claims that a magico-realist writer "se enfrenta a la realidad y trata de desentrañarla, de descubrir lo que hay de misterioso en las cosas, en la vida, en las acciones humanas."[5] The term magical realism has become so confusing that Emir Rodríguez Monegal suggested that we abandon it altogether: "en vez de estimular el diálogo crítico, lo paraliza; en vez de permitir la comunicación, la interrumpe; en vez de iluminar al obra, la oscurece."[6] Not only are the various definitions of the concept irreconcilable, but the words "realismo mágico", according to Rodríguez Monegal, "se aplican a todo escritor hispanoamericano que no sea crasamente naturalista, viajan por el continente colgándose a diestros y siniestros, tirios y troyanos" (p.27). Because the concepts of the fantastic and magical realism are similar in certain respects, they have frequently been used interchangeably, as was pointed out by Celia Zapata in "¿Realismo mágico o cuento fantástico?": "¿Cómo puede explicarse que los mismos autores y las mismas obras del género fantástico figuren en conocidas antologías del Realismo Mágico. . .?"[7] In spite of the confusion surrounding these terms, however, we feel that they could serve a valuable purpose in literary criticism, since there is a large body of literature with common traits that differs from well established modes such as realism and the marvellous. Instead of finding completely new expressions to refer to this type of writing, it would be useful to define the existing terminology, and to develop a viable reading code or set of norms that would help us to interpret it. In this study we will clarify the concepts of magical realism and the fantastic, and establish a complex of guidelines that will distinguish between the two similar yet independent modes. The reader will thus be able to identify the implicit framework upon which the author bases his text. Just as the knowledge of a certain structure is necessary to the creation of a work of literature --"nul ne peut combiner (produire) un récit, sans se référer à un système implicite d'unités et de règles"[8]--the recognition of that structure is essential to the understanding of that text.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

The Fantastic

The fantastic has been the object of frequent discussion and study, but critics do not even agree whether it is a mode, a genre or an attitude towards reality. While Ana María Barrenechea considers it a sub-genre,[1] Todorov calls it a genre, and at the same time destroys the concept of genre by situating the fantastic between the uncanny and the marvellous, that is, on the borderline of two literary forms: "rien ne nous empêche de considérer le fantastique précisément comme un genre toujours évanescent."[2] Harry Belevan claims that he is trying to describe the "essence" of the fantastic; "el ontos constitutivo de lo fantástico literario",[3] which is not a genre, but an "objeto de intuición" (p.100), and a form of expression resulting from a certain technique (p.106). For some critics, the concept can only be described vaguely as a type of literature. Bellemin-Noël sees it as a form[4] or an aesthetic mode (p.19), but also calls it a narrative technique (p.4) and a particular "manière de raconter" (p.3). According to Louis Vax, it is found in various forms of literature such as the novel or the ballad, and also in pictorial art and architecture.[5] In La Séduction de l'étrange he claims that the fantastic is "une manière de sentir".[6] Maribel Tamargo considers it an effect produced by a certain type of text,[7] while J.-B. Baronian believes that it is an expression of the soul: "Le fantastique, à la vérité, est plus un état d'âme, un état de coeur qu'un état de fait."[8] Rather than treating the fantastic as a genre, which is a specific and historically identifiable form, or as a particular attitude towards the world, which would be too vague to be useful in studying a specific kind of literature, we propose to consider it as a mode, or a literary category that is less strictly defined than a genre. To Robert Scholes' seven modes (satire, picaresque, comedy, history, sentiment, tragedy and romance) we would add that of the fantastic, and amplify his "spectrum of fictional possibilities".[9] Ulrich Wicks suggests that a modal approach would partially solve the problem of whether the picaresque should be considered as a genre or a tradition, since that type of literature could then be studied both as a specific genre, historically and geographically restricted, or as a particular quality of a fictitious world that can characterize works of several genres, periods or national literatures. He sees a modal approach as a reading code, which guides our reaction to a literary text:

> A modal perspective can help to shape our esthetic response to the concrete work before us. It can orient for us the context of that work in terms of all the narrative possibilities that are contained along the spectrum. To recognize that a particular work belongs, say, to romance (or that the romance mode dominates it) is to channel our response to --and our expectations of-- that work. Modal awareness allows us to group the particular work with other works from our total experience of fiction that function in a similar way.[10]

The fantastic then is not a prose narrative of a certain length with a well defined structure and identifying themes, which is how some critics approach it (Todorov, for example), but a mode, or a broad category with some essential characteristics.

Since any type of literature can only be defined satisfactorily by comparing it with other forms, it is necessary to situate the fantastic within the context of a larger category, and briefly consider some of its neighbouring literary manifestations. Although many critics equate the fantastic with fantasy literature in general --Rabkin, Baronian, Anderson Imbert, to name only a few--,[11] a distinction is frequently made between the two. A fairy tale in which monsters, witches and elves appear in a fictitious world totally removed from our conventional view of reality is obviously different from a story in which a human protagonist in an everyday world suddenly encounters an apparently supernatural being. In the former, nothing surprises the characters, since magic is the norm, while in the latter, the protagonist is surprised and often terrified by a situation that his culture has taught him to reject as impossible. The fairy tale belongs to the mode of the marvellous, which has its own laws of verisimilitude that differ from those of accepted logic, but the second example belongs to the fantastic, since the world view coincides with our own, and is threatened by an event which does not fit into the logical code expressed by the rest of the text. Roger Caillois distinguishes in this way between the fantastic and the féerique:

> Il est important de distinguer entre ces notions proches et trop souvent confondues. Le féerique est un univers merveilleux qui s'ajoute au monde réel sans lui porter atteinte ni en détruire la cohérence. Le fantastique, au contraire, manifeste un scandale, une déchirure, une irruption insolite, presque insupportable dans le monde réel.[12]

> La féerie est un récit situé dès le début dans l'univers fictif des enchanteurs et des génies. Les premiers mots de la première phrase sont déjà un avertissement: En ce temps-là ou Il y avait une fois... C'est pourquoi les fées et les ogres ne sauraient inquiéter personne. L'imagination les exile dans un monde lointoin, fluide, étanche, sans rapport ni communication avec la réalité de chaque jour, où l'esprit n'accepte guère qu'ils puissent faire irruption. (p.11)

In the fantastic, on the other hand, supernatural beings destroy the harmony of a world ruled by the norms of reason. There is thus a greater distance between the reader and the world of the marvellous than is the case with the fantastic, where the representation of reality is familiar to us.

The fantastic can also be distinguished from the kind of literature in which the protagonist is terrified of sinister sounds and shapes, but eventually discovers that they have a rational explanation. This is what Todorov calls the surnaturel expliqué,[13] and it was used frequently in Gothic novels, such as Ann Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho. In such cases, there are no supernatural events or beings at all, and the protagonist is merely in the presence of the disquieting, or uncanny (l'étrange), which Todorov considers a neighbouring genre:

> Dans les oeuvres qui appartiennent à ce genre, on relate des événements qui peuvent parfaitement s'expliquer par les lois de la raison, mais qui sont, d'une manière ou d'une autre, incroyables, extraordinaires, choquants, singuliers, inquiétants, insolites et qui, pour cette raison, provoquent chez le personnage et le lecteur une réaction semblable à celle que les textes fantastiques nous ont rendue familière. (pp.51-52)

The uncanny can be produced either by mysterious happenings that turn out to have natural causes, or by the presence of something that is generally disquieting. This is what Freud called das Unheimliche in his study of Hoffmann's "Der Sandmann".[14] In this story, the lawyer Coppelius terrifies the young Nathaniel, because the latter is reminded of the imaginary sandman who tears out the eyes of children reluctant to go to bed. His childhood fear and the unpleasant appearance of Coppelius produce the sensation of the uncanny every time Nathaniel meets a man who resembles the old lawyer.

Another type of "pseudo-fantastic" can occur in a story where the apparently supernatural events are the result of a hallucination or dream. Although nothing unambiguously supernatural has taken place, the reader has the impression throughout the narrative that he is in the presence of the fantastic, until the reason for the occurrence of the extraordinary events is revealed at the end.

Science fiction can easily be distinguished from the fantastic, in that the fictitious world is an extrapolation of our own, and its norms of logic are based on existing scientific discoveries and theories. Every situation is integrated within the perspective posited by the text, and nothing surprises the protagonist or reader. What would obviously be regarded as supernatural in a different context, is considered normal in the world of science fiction.

The fantistic differs from these modes of writing, because two distinct levels of reality are represented in it. One is our everyday world, ruled by laws of reason and convention, and the other is the supernatural, or that which is inexplicable according to our logic. In both the uncanny and the oneiric, the strange events may temporarily disorient the reader, but everything can be explained rationally at the end, while in science fiction and the fairy tale, the fictitious world is so different from our own that we do not question the possibility of what happens. In the fantastic, on the other hand, the dominant world view of the text is very similar to our own, and the laws of verisimilitude coincide largely with ours. Against the background of this logical world, the narrator introduces a level of reality which rational man cannot accept. This is the world of superstition and myth, which contradicts the world of reason to which we are accustomed. The occurrence of the supernatural is often seen as a breach of the normal order of things. Caillois defines the fantastic as the "rupture de la cohérence universelle",[15] or "l'irruption de l'insolite dans le banal" (p.12). It is an expression of our fear at seeing our world of reason destroyed:

> Les récits d'épouvante surnaturelle traduisaient l'effroi de voir soudain la régularité, l'ordre du monde si péniblement établi et prouvé par l'investigation méthodique de la science expérimentale céder à l'assaut des forces irréconciliables, nocturnes, démoniaques. (p.23)

In order to perceive the supernatural as such, the implied author must create a convincing level of reality. It is only if the reader can identify with the fictitious world that he will be surprised at situations presented as different and unacceptable. Gerhard Haas stresses that the most important characteristic of the fantastic is the simultaneous presence of the real and the irrational:

> Im einfachsten Definitionskonstrukt zur Bestimmung der Wesensmerkmale phantastischer Texte steht einer realistisch gezeichneten, empirisch-alltäglich bestimmbaren Welt eine Welt des Irrational-unerklärbaren gegenüber, in der das aussergewöhnliche geschieht. Aus dem punktuellen Zusammenstoss beider Bereiche entstehen Schrecken, Angst, Grauen, der Schauder vor einem das Netz des Alltäglichen und gesichert Erklärbaren zerreissenden Geschehen.[16]

He points out that the "objective reality" of the reader does not determine his reaction to the supernatural events described in the text; only the underlying fictitious world view provides the criterion of what is to be considered as natural or supernatural (p.343). Whether the "real" world of the text can differ much from that of the reader without destroying the effect of the fantastic will be discussed in the next chapter. But it is essential that the text itself creates the perspective against which the unusual is measured. Bellemin-Noël calls the existence of this implied world view an "effet d'idéologie", which is equated neither with the explicit mediation of the narrator, nor with the perspective of the protagonist, but constitutes an intermediate stage of perception:

> Il consiste à instituer une sorte d'étage intermédiaire entre le narrateur absent (absentifié) et l'énoncé proprement centré sur, orienté vers, aimanté par les agissements du héros. Non pas un écran (= le Narrateur), mais un voile translucide sans être transparent, qui assure le rôle d'un indice de réalité au sens où l'on parle d'un indice de réfraction --par rapport auquel, donc, l'insolite se définit comme tel.[17]

The creation of a realistic framework and the introduction of the supernatural that contradicts it is in some way similar to the devices used by the narrator of the Volkssage or popular legend. Max Lüthi, in his study of the fairy tale and legend, distinguishes between the two on the basis of the dimensionality of the fictitious world. In the fairy tale, there is only one level of reality, since that of the supernatural is treated as if it were part of the natural. Even though a human may meet an ogre, the two beings do not consider each other as coming from a different dimension: "Diesseits und Jenseits liegen im Märchen auf derselben Ebene."[18] In the legend, on the contrary, the supernatural is presented as essentially different from the natural, and situated in another dimension of reality. Although men and monsters can interact, the supernatural beings are strange and usually terrifying to the inhabitants of this world:

> Die Sage teilt die Welt in eine profane und eine numinose Sphäre auf; äusserlich können beide Welten ineinander übergehen --ein Mensch kann durch den Bund mit guten oder bösen Jenseitigen überweltliche Kräfte erlangen-- aber geistig ist die Trennungslinie äusserst scharf. (p.28)

The fairy tale is thus uni-dimensional, while the popular legend is bi-dimensional. Several critics have recognized the structural similarity of the fantastic and the legend, and some even claim that one form has descended directly from the other. Vax calls the legend the ancestor of the fantastic story,[19] while for Haas, one is merely a literary variation of the other:

> Wenn man so will, ist in diesem Sinne die phantastische Erzählung im engeren Sinne nichts anderes als eine, meist psychologisch subtiler, genauer strukturierte, erzählerisch ausgebaute und gewissermassen säkularisierte Volkssage.[20]

In both forms, the effect produced by the story is one of terror in the face of the supernatural, which cannot be controlled because it belongs to a different dimension. While the popular legend and the fantastic story are analogous with respect to bi-dimensionality, there is an essential difference between them. Not only is one an oral, and the other a literary form, but the popular legend is a means of transmitting cultural traditions. Although the supernatural in the legend is considered disturbing, it is not questioned on the grounds of reason and logic. The listener does not reject the irrational events, because they do not contradict his total view of reality, even if they belong to an order that differs from that of his own world. The supernatural is treated as unfamiliar, but not logically incompatible with other beliefs, since there is no rational distinction between it and the natural. It is held in awe because it is marvelled at, not because it belongs to a different logical code.

In the fantastic, on the contrary, the supernatural is seen as problematical because it cannot be integrated within the implicit ideological code conveyed by the text. The irrational event or being is described as strange and disconcerting, or problematized:

> les événements fantastiques sont problématisés comme tels. Le héros ressent lui-même son aventure comme faisant problème; il en commente l'étrangeté dans le temps même où il éprouve des émotions qui le dérangent. . . .[21]

Not only is the supernatural perceived as belonging to a different dimension, but the fact that it exists at all is rejected on logical grounds, and the inexplicable events become profoundly disturbing. Vax considers this effect of the uncanny as characteristic of the fantastic, and claims that the uncanny and the fantastic are almost synonyms.[22] According to him, the fantastic is the result of the mysterious, the awe-inspiring and the sacred, rather than the threat to a conventional view of reality (p.124). However, his definition does not distinguish adequately between the fantastic and the uncanny, and the problem of defining the former by contrasting it with other modes is not solved. The uncanny should be considered as a category in itself, and the term applied to that kind of literature in which the world appears strange and mysterious without the occurrence of a supernatural event. To establish terror as the most important characteristic of the fantastic is to create an extremely vague and therefore useless concept. On another occasion, Vax equates the fantastic with the "merveilleux noir",[23] which confuses the issue even more, as it situates it in the domain of supernatural horror or terror. The latter, however, is a completely different category altogether. The author of such a tale stresses the horror of a particular situation, without describing the supernatural as incompatible with a certain logical code. The reader of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Mask of the Red Death" does not question the possibility of the occurrence narrated at the end of the story. The figure of the Red Death inspires fear and repulsion:

> Then, summoning the wild courage of despair, a throng of revellers at once threw themselves into the black apartment, and, seizing the mummer, whose tall figure stood erect and motionless within the shadow of the ebony clock, gasped in unutterable horror at finding the grave-cerements and corpse-like mask which they handled with so violent a rudeness, untenanted by any tangible form.[24]

Vax's characterization of the fantastic would apply very well to Poe's narrative: "Les sentiments sur lesquels joue l'émotion fantastique sont des sentiments esthétiquement négatifs: peur, horreur, dégoût."[25] Not only does this criterion apply to supernatural horror, but to the uncanny of the Gothic romance as well.

We must therefore reject fear and horror as a criterion in the case of the fantastic and reconsider the concept of bi-dimensionality which we have already discussed. One of the most important distinguishing characteristics of the fantastic is thus the presence in the text of two different levels of reality, the natural and the supernatural. Without this trait, a narrative cannot be fantastic, even if it conveys an atmosphere of the uncanny. These levels are logically contradictory, since one is defined by the laws of conventional reason and empirical knowledge, while the other is characterized by the code of the irrational, superstition and myth. Rabkin uses this criterion to distinguish between the unusual and the fantastic:

> One of the key distinguishing marks of the fantastic is that the perspectives enforced by the ground rules of the narrative world must be diametrically contradicted. . . . By virtue of this notion of diametric reconfiguration, direct contradiction of perspectives, we can distinguish the fantastic from other non-normal occurrences: the unexpected and the irrelevant.[26]

Any narrative that is set in the realm of fantasy is to be excluded from the mode of the fantastic, since only one level of reality is described, and any story in which there is no supernatural dimension is likewise not to be considered as fantastic, according to our hypothesis for establishing a reading code for this literary form.

However, as we have demonstrated in our discussion of the differences between the popular legend and the fantastic, the presence of two contradictory levels of reality in the text characterizes not only the fantastic, but other forms as well. We must therefore establish an additional criterion for defining the fantastic. One of the levels of reality --the natural-- must be pre-supposed by the text, asserted by the narrator, and accepted by the implied reader, while the other, the supernatural, is rejected as inconsistent with our normal perspective and structuring of reality. The juxtaposition of these two codes --the natural and the supernatural-- creates an illogical and disconcerting world view. Rabkin calls the effect that such a text produces astonishment "when the ground rules of a narrative world are suddenly made to turn about 180°."[27] This kind of contradiction creates more than just surprise, however. The implied reader experiences disarray when he cannot interpret certain events within the framework of the narrative as a whole. Todorov claims that in this case the reader hesitates between accepting an apparently supernatural event, and finding a rational explanation:

> Dans un monde qui est bien le nôtre, celui que nous connaissons, sans diables, sylphides, ni vampires, se produit un événement qui ne peut s'expliquer par les lois de ce même monde familier. Celui qui perçoit l'événement doit opter pour l'une des deux solutions possibles: ou bien il s'agit d'une illusion des sens, d'un produit de l'imagination et les lois du monde restent alors ce qu'elles sont; ou bien l'événement a véritablement eu lieu, il est partie intégrante de la réalité, mail alors cette réalité est régie par des lois inconnues de nous. . . .
>
> Le fantastique occupe le temps de cette incertitude; dés qu'on choisit l'une ou l'autre réponse, on quitte le fantastique pour entrer dans un genre voisin, l'étrange ou le merveilleux. Le fantastique, c'est l'hésitation éprouvée par un être qui ne connaît que les lois naturelles, face à un événement en apparence surnaturel.[28]

Caillois already pointed out that ambiguity is essential to the fantastic. It forces the reader to decide whether or not he can accept the supernatural events described in the text. However, we believe that it is not a question of accepting the supernatural or not. In the fantastic, there are two codes of reality, neither of which can be ignored. The implied author deliberately creates a realistic world, while at the same time giving us indications of the supernatural. The narrative is interpreted according to two codes of perception, between which the reader does not hesitate. Moreover, in many fantastic stories an occurrence is unambiguously supernatural, and a rational explanation would be an unwarranted extrapolation of the text, or a direct misreading. Do we then leave the domain of the fantastic because there is no justification to hesitate between a logical and an irrational explanation? Todorov's criterion of hesitation is too restrictive in that it disqualifies all but a very limited number of works from the fantastic. Even in the case of the surnaturel expliqué, we can argue that the disarray of the reader faced with two conflicting codes of reality is often maintained throughout most of the text, and that it can therefore be considered as an example of the fantastic while the situation described by the narrator appears to be supernatural. Since a rational explanation is given at the end, however, the fantastic is destroyed, even though the devices of that mode are employed throughout the narrative.

A far more satisfactory term than hesitation, which is a reaction on the part of the reader to textual indications, is antinomy, or the simultaneous presence of two conflicting codes in the text. Since neither can be accepted in the presence of the other, the apparently supernatural phenomenon remains inexplicable. Contrary to the marvellous, where every event can be integrated in a certain code of reality (or irreality), or the uncanny, where unusual occurrences can be understood within a realistic framework, the fantastic creates a world which cannot be explained by any coherent code. This is how Irène Bessière describes the fantastic:

> Il se définit par l'irréalité intellectuelle de ses prémisses, par la désignation d'un fait ou d'une série de faits inconciliables avec les lois de la nature et celles de la surnature, telles qu'elles existent ou sont reçues dans une aire culturelle donnée. Il fait de la fausseté son propre objet, son propre mobile.[29]

In some cases, the text does not prevent the reader from finding a rational solution, and discarding the suggestions of the supernatural as deliberate mystification. The reader then hesitates between taking the implications seriously or immediately rejecting them. At one point in the text, however, a rational solution is no longer possible, and we are left with two equally invalid codes. Bessière claims that the déconstruction of the different codes is one of the most important characteristics of the fantastic work Le Diable amoureux:

> Or l'intérêt du texte est de poser, dès son début, l'ordre naturel et l'ordre surnaturel (par le thème de la cabale), pour les déconstruire simultanément et installer l'incertitude sur tout signe, avant de rétablir in fine leur coexistence complémentaire. (p.57)

While it is certainly true that the code of the natural is progressively destroyed in the fantastic, the code of the supernatural is invalidated right at the beginning of the text, because the setting is conventional reality. By the end of the narrative, each code has been developed to the point where it must be accepted, even though it does not account for the events occurring in the fictional world.

The ambiguity of the fantastic is not in the nature of the object, but in the nature of a world which is ruled by certain norms that are destroyed by something we cannot accept. As Belevan explains it:

> La ambigüedad, entonces, es evidente: inscrito permanentemente dentro de la realidad, lo fantástico se presenta como un atentado, como una afrenta a esa misma realidad que lo circunscribe. Esta ambigüedad es la que designamos con el término que, a falta de uno más explícito, nos hemos visto precisados a acuñar: descritura.[30]

Many critics have stressed the importance of the disorientation produced in the reader by the description of an ambiguous reality. Bellemin-Noël remarks that the reader "s'en trouve déboussolé, ayant 'perdu le nord', ou désorienté, dépossédé de son 'orient', de sa pureté et de sa fois naïve en une origine repérable des choses."[31]

Vax believes that the désarroi of the protagonist in the fantastic is more important than the experience of the supernatural.[32] The fantastic is an "instabilité permanente" (p.160), since no set of norms, whether rational or irrational, can ever explain the functioning of the fictitious world. It is incorrect, however, to separate this disorientation in the reader and sometimes the protagonist from the ambiguity of the text, as does Vax:

> Si la littérature fantastique est généralement ambiguë, ce n'est pas tant qu'elle nous laisse indécis entre le prodigieux et le familier --car une nuance importante sépare l'indécidabilité, entre deux thèses clairement formulées, et l'obscurité, voire l'incohérence interne, d'un discours-- mais plutôt parce qu'il y a dans l'expérience fantastique comme dans toute expérience vécue quelque chose de profond, d'opaque et de singulier, un je ne sais quoi d'autant plus énigmatique qu'il échappe avec aisance à tous les efforts de notre intelligence.[33]

It is the antinomy of the text that produces the ambiguity of the fictional world and thus the disorientation of the reader. If certain situations strike us as uncanny, that does not necessarily indicate the presence of the fantastic, unless the sensation is produced by the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural. The second criterion of our definition of the fantastic is the presence of this type of antinomy in the text, and its presentation as such. A supernatural event occurring in a world controlled by reason does not automatically make that text fantastic unless it is described as contradictory with respect to the logical code established at the beginning. In the absence of obvious problematization of the resulting incongruous world, the reader will accept a new code of reality which encompasses the natural and the supernatural.

Since the introduction of a single inexplicable event does not produce a sustained antinomy, the structure of the text as a whole is important for the creation of the fantastic. A motif must be sufficiently well developed in relation to both codes in order to be effective. As Vax correctly points out:

> Le revenant n'est rien par lui-même. C'est le contexte qui précise sa forme et fait résonner en nous le ton affectif qui convient. Ce n'est pas le motif qui fait le fantastique, c'est le fantastique qui se développe à partir du motif.[34]

A narrative in which a ghost is briefly introduced at the end, without any previous indication of such an outcome, can appear humorous or inconsistent. The absence of a convincing realistic framework usually prevents the reader from being disconcerted by a supernatural event, since there is no obvious contrast between the plausible and the impossible. Finally, irony in describing the supernatural can destroy the fantastic, as it creates a distance between the reader and the events described. A supernatural motif can thus be used in different types of narrative:

> il n'y a de perception du fantastique dans l'écrit que si la "fantasticité" est soulignée par le discours lui-même; car c'est le discours, non l'événement, qui qualifie l'histoire: en théorie, une "même" aventure est susceptible d'être contée en registre fantastique, merveilleux, ou même réaliste. . . .[35]

The fantastic must adhere to several strict narrative rules if it is to exist at all, and yet it is one of the literary modes that makes the reader forget its conventions. As Bessière remarks: "Le récit fantastique est peut-être le plus artificiel et le plus délibéré, mais qui provoque paradoxalement les réactions les plus naïves de la part du lecteur."[36] Vax calls the effect of the fantastic seduction: "Pour que le lecteur prenne le monstre au sérieux, il faut que le monstre le séduise. . . ."[37] The reader is progressively carried away by the realistic development of a logically impossible situation: "Il faut que le sortilège devienne plausible, et que l'incroyable, l'impossible prennent le visage de l'évidence" (p.29). Vax stresses the importance of the "réduction de distance psychique" (p.140) if the reader is to react emotionally and uncritically to the disturbing fictitious world. The most obvious difference between the effect produced by the marvellous and the fantastic is that the preposterous events of the latter are presented as real, and the reader temporarily loses awareness of the impossibility of their existence. Bessière calls the fantastic thétique, because it tries to convince the reader of the veracity of the narrative.[38] The reader, for his part, consents to being disturbed by something he does not believe in by playing the "jeu avec la peur":[39]

> L'amateur de fantastique ne joue pas avec l'intelligence, mais avec la peur. Il ne regarde pas du dehors, el se laisse envoûter. Ce n'est pas an autre univers qui se dresse face au nôtre qui, paradoxalement, se métamorphose, se pourrit et devient autre.[40]

One of the most important devices for ensuring the reader's participation is authorial reticence, which makes the inexplicable and mysterious even more disturbing. The narrator gives us only enough information to create suspense, but leaves the rest to our imagination. A logical antinomy loses its disconcerting effect, and is in fact destroyed, if it is explained. The fantastic is characterized precisely by the fact that the circumstances that are described cannot be integrated within a logical framework. If they could, the antinomious world would be transformed into one that could be defined by a new set of norms. The third criterion of the fantastic is therefore authorial reticence, or the deliberate withholding of information and explanations about the disconcerting fictitious world.

Magical Realism

Magical realism, just like the fantastic, is the name of a literary mode rather than of a specific, historically identifiable genre, and can be found in most types of prose fiction. It does not refer to a movement, which is characterized by particular historical and geographical limitations, and a coherence which magical realism lacks. As Roberto González Echaverría points out, this term is applied to completely different "moments" in the discussion of art and literature.[41] Franz Roh, who introduced the term in 1925, considered it as an aesthetic category.[42] For the German art critic, magical realism was a way of reacting to reality and pictorially representing the mysteries inherent in it. In Latin America in the Forties, however, it was a means of expressing the authentic American mentality and developing an autonomous literature. Finally, after Angel Flores' article on magical realism in 1955, it became a concept in literary criticism, and was applied to authors who adopted certain themes and techniques in their writing. Not only is the last category extremely vague, but the term refers to three distinct activities --pictorial art, the expression of a national literature, and literary criticism:

> No hay verdadera relación de continuidad entre esos tres momentos, y por consiguiente el realismo mágico carece la cohesión necesaria para podérsele considerar como movimiento literario o crítico. El tercer momento no está directamente vinculado con el segundo, ya que Flores evidentemente desconoce en 1955 los pronunciamentos de Carpentier, Uslar Pietri y Portuondo; ni con el primero, ya que Flores y sus seguidores hacen caso omiso de las teorías de Roh o

> tienen una relación muy lejana y de trasmano con ellas. . . . La continuidad o la cohesión no hay que buscarla en una secuencia histórica, pues ésta no existe, sino en ciertas coordenadas de pensamiento que subyacen a toda manifestación del realismo mágico como programa para la literatura hispanoamericana. . . .[43]

Although it is useful to know what the term "magical realism" originally referred to in Roh's theories, one cannot apply it to pictorial art and literature without causing confusion, since the two belong to a different medium of expression. Thus the link established between painting and literature cannot be very specific. If it is to be considered as a "concepto teórico", as González Echevarría claims (p.18), and not as a vague and useless concept, we must distinguish between magical realism in painting, and that found in literature. If a term is borrowed from another medium of expression, it acquires entirely different implications, even if there was some common ground between them. The same definition cannot hold for painting as well as for literature, and the attempt to explain what is considered magical realism in Latin America on the basis of Roh's art theories inevitably leads to confusion. However, just because there does not exist a satisfactory theoretical definition of the term, we should not discard it altogether. Many critics may consider it "un mero vacío teórico, un concepto ambiguo e innecesario en la crítica hispanoamericana actual",[44] and Emil Volek gives a list of different ways in which the term is commonly used:

> en este término se siente hoy ya claramente cierta dualidad entre su aspiración a principio no-ético y artístico general de un lado y a denominación de cierta corriente artística concreta, condicionada territorial, histórica, social y artísticamente, de otro. En cuanto a lo primero, he aquí algunos tipos de su empleo: 1) tipo de realismo;

> 2) no-realismo; 3) anti-realismo; 4) explotación de cierta esfera temática; 5) cierto aspecto no-realista en una obra.[45]

But we believe that an analysis of the various definitions of the term will allow us to develop a useful critical concept.

Although critics do not agree on which characteristics are essential to magical realism, certain properties are mentioned frequently. One of these is the occurrence of the supernatural, or anything that is contrary to our conventional view of reality. González Echevarría believes that magical realism gives us a world view that does not depend on natural or physical laws, and is not based on objective reality.[46] However, the fictitious world is not entirely divorced from reality either. Angel Flores, whose article had a great impact on scholars dealing with magical realism, considers it an "amalgamation of realism and fantasy",[47] and traces the current to Kafka, with his "difficult art of mingling his drab reality with the phantasmal world of his nightmares" (p.189). According to him, the "practitioners of magical realism cling to reality as if to prevent 'literature' from getting in their way, as if to prevent their myth from flying off, as in fairy tales, to supernatural realms" (p.191). Seymour Menton espouses the same view when he claims that "en literatura, el efecto mágico se logra mediante la yuxtaposición de escenas y de detalles de gran realismo con situaciones completamente fantásticas."[48] The presence of the supernatural is often attributed to the primitive or "magical" Indian mentality, which cooexists with European rationality. For Ray Verzasconi, as for many other critics, magical realism is "an expression of the New World reality which at once combines the rational elements of the European supercivilization, and the irrational elements of a primitive America."[49] Floyd Merrell explains that magical realism stems "from the conflict between two pictures of the world."[50] It is a "synthetic, totalizing activity" (p.13), which offers the reader two completely different perceptions of reality --the magical and the rational. Magical realism is thus based on reality, or a world with which the author is familiar, while expressing the myths and superstitions of the American Indians. The themes treated in magico-realist narrative are often a more important criterion than style or structure, and authors are frequently excluded from the category because their stories or novels are set in large urban centres rather than amongst the American natives. Lucila-Inés Mena's attitude towards magical realism is prevalent in the criticism of this phenomenon:

> También es notable el hecho de que aquellos autores a quienes más comúnmente se denomina mágicorrealistas cultivan una temática que enfoca insistentemente la realidad americana a través de sus mitos y de su naturaleza primigenia. Podríamos pensar entonces que el uso de lo maravilloso que esta realidad proporciona sea uno de los factores que nos lleva a considerar a Rulfo, Carpentier, Asturias y García Márquez como escritores magicorrealistas, mientras dudamos acerca de la filiación mágicorrealista de Borges, Cortázar, Sábato y Fuentes.[51]

Anderson Imbert also expresses this common view when he states that "cuando los críticos jóvenes hablan de 'realismo mágico' apuntan precisamente a una literatura rica en contenido americano."[52] According to Flores, magical realism is an "authentic expression"[53] of Latin America. Other critics, however, disagree that magical realism is a uniquely Latin American phenomenon. If this mode of literary expression is characterized by the presentation of two different world views, why could it not be found in any country that has more than one ethnic or racial group? Valbuena Briones, for example, considers magical realism as a universal manifestation:

> El realismo mágico no se limita, como ha creído algún crítico, a los pueblos latinoamericanos que tengan una amplia población de indios y negros y que con sus culturas pueden presentar una nueva realidad en la que se funden elementos irracionales y primitivos, sino que, bien entendido, como lo hemos venido explicando hasta aquí, es una corriente universal, y se puede añadir que inherente al ser humano.[54]

Even though Flores calls magical realism an authentic expression of Latin America, he traces it back to Franz Kafka and Proust, and claims that the writers of the First World War came "to re-discover symbolism and magical realism."[55] In fact, Kafka's detailed description of Gregor Samsa's transformation into a beetle, which is set in a realistic atmosphere, reminds us of stories such as "Viaje a la semilla", in which Carpentier gives us a minute description of an equally absurd event in a realistic setting --the reversal of time. If magical realism is the amalgamation of a rational and an irrational world view, then we can also include in this category works such as Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita, in which the devil makes his appearance in twentieth century Moscow. This narrative, which has been called an example of "fantastic realism",[56] can well be compared to Miguel Angel Asturias' Hombres de maíz, where fantasy, such as the transformation of men into animals, alternates with the reality of the maiceros in Guatemala. In both these cases, we have a coherent code of the supernatural, or a set of norms which guide the characters' interpretation of their surroundings according to a world view that differs from that of logic and reason. While the narrator of Asturias' work believes in nahualism and the power of sorcerers, the narrator in

Bulgakov's novel believes in an immortal Satan and witches' sabbaths. The difference is that the irrational world view in one represents the primitive American mentality, while in the other, it corresponds to European superstitions. This is one of the characteristics that distinguishes magical realism from surrealism, in which heterogeneous elements are juxtaposed by free association, without any specific code of the supernatural determining it. While magical realism is based on an ordered, even if irrational, perspective, surrealism brings about "artificial"[57] combinations: it is "eine reine Kunst der Evokation, die einzig durch das subjektive Bewusstsein des Rezipienten aktualisiert wird. Ein festgefügtes, das Individuum einbettendes Referenzsystem bleibt dem Surrealismus deshalb auch unerreichbar."[58] Magical realism is thus characterized first of all by two conflicting, but autonomously coherent, perspectives, one based on an "enlightened" and rational view of reality, and the other on what we consider to be supernatural presented as part of everyday reality. Although magical realism usually shows us a world view that is dominant in a specific culture, or inherited from earlier generations, it would restrict the concept unnecessarily to establish this as a criterion. The irrational but coherent perspective of an individual can be perceived by the Western reader in the same way as the superstitious world view of a culture that is unfamiliar to him. In both cases, he is confronted with a point of view which is totally alien, presented by a narrator of an otherwise recognizable world. While the reader realizes that events described in the narrative are logically impossible, he must accept their integration within the fictitious world. Obviously, if the supernatural is not recognized as such, there can be no magical realism. This is why criticism of the view that magical realism is not an amalgamation of reality and fantasy because the latter has always existed in literature is erroneous. When Russell M. Cluff mentions that One Thousand and One Nights is an example of such literature without, however, belonging to magical realism, he does not realize that for the implied author of that narrative there was no distinction between the natural and the supernatural.[59] Both real and logically impossible events were considered to be on the same level of reality, and therefore the concept of the supernatural did not even exist. The author of a magico-realist narrative, on the other hand, implicitly presents the irrational world view as different from his own by situating the story in present-day reality, using learned expressions and vocabulary, and showing he is familiar with logical reasoning and empirical knowledge. The term "magic" refers to the fact that the perspective presented by the text in an explicit manner is not accepted according to the implicit world view of the educated implied author. As González Echevarría points out, "Toda magia, toda maravilla, supone una alteración del orden, una alteridad --supone al otro, al mundo, que nos mira desde la orilla opuesta."[60] According to him, the very act of distancing oneself from the superstitions held by a particular social group makes it impossible to be considered as a representative of that society. This is why he asks whether magical realism can be an authentic expression of Spanish American Indians (p.38). In his discussion of lo real maravilloso,[61] whose practitioners represent the "ontological" manifestation of magical realism in that they consider the American continent as marvellous in itself, and not as a result of an outsider's attitude, which he calls the "phenomenological" manifestation of magical realism, he stresses that distancing is essential for the perception of the marvellous:

> Suponer que lo maravilloso existe en América es adoptar una (falsa) perspectiva europea, porque sólo desde otra perspectiva podemos descubrir la alteridad, la diferencia --lo mismo visto desde dentro es homogéneo, liso, sin aristas, sin diferencias. Toda maravilla es una distanciación, una separación.[62]

In this respect, the implied author of magical realism is analogous to the one found in the fantastic, since both describe situations in which they do not believe, and introduce the supernatural into a realistic setting. The main distinction between the two modes is the manner in which the irrational world view is perceived by the narrator.

In magical realism, the supernatural is not presented as problematic. Although the educated reader considers the rational and the irrational as conflicting world views, he does not react to the supernatural in the text as if it were antinomious with respect to our conventional view of reality, since it is integrated within the norms of perception of the narrator and characters in the fictitious world. As Flores points out in regard to Kafka's Die Verwandlung, the absurd metamorphosis is described as if it did not contradict our laws of reason: "the unreal happens as part of reality. The transformation of Gregor Samsa into a cockroach or bedbug. . .is not a matter of conjecture or discussion: it happened and it was accepted by the other characters as an almost normal event."[63] In contrast to the fantastic, the supernatural in magical realism does not disconcert the reader, and this is the fundamental difference between the two modes. The same phenomena that are portrayed as problematical by the author of a fantastic narrative are presented in a matter-of-fact manner by the magical realist. Since the supernatural is not perceived as unacceptable because it is antinomious, the characters and reader do not try to find a natural explanation, as is frequently the case with the fantastic. Arturo A. Fox stresses the importance of the lack of preconceived beliefs in magical realism. While the fantastic story "expresa o implícitamente, contiene la aserción de un modo de ser, que generalmente coíncide con el del lector, y desde esta base se nos presentan hechos percibidos como desviaciones de la norma establecida", the magico-realist narrative presents the strange world view without any judgment:

> Los caracteres, en otras palabras, funcionan en un plano de realidad autónomo, carente de un "deber ser", es decir, de criterios ontológicos preestablecidos. El autor magicorrealista no discrimina; sencillamente suspende el juicio y trata del mismo modo y con pareja atención tanto la conversión de Gregor Samsa en cucaracha como los trastornos que ello trae a su carrera de viajante de ventas.[64]

Especially in the case of Latin American literature, the practitioner of magical realism shows his interest in, and tolerance of, a different perception of the world:

> Para él, sencillamente, esta mirada "vale la pena", es equivalente y no "inferior" a la del hombre de la civilización "moderna". Así resulta que la esencia de esta emancipación aparentemente "artística" es profundamente democrática y en principio revolucionaria.[65]

This opinion voiced by Emil Volek is analogous to González Echevarría's claim that the magical realist, in the case of Latin American fiction, adopts the point of view of the Indians, and considers it as valid, not strange and unreliable:

> El escritor hispanoamericano prefiere instalarse del lado de allá de esa estética media o fronteriza que describe Roh; del lado del salvaje, del creyente, no en ese punto ambiguo donde el milagro se justifica por un acto de percepción reflexivo, en que la conciencia de la distancia entre el observador y lo observado, entre el sujeto y ese otro exótico, genera la extrañeza y el asombro.[66]

While Franz Roh used the term "magical" to refer to an authentic attitude towards reality, the concept as used by ethnologists at that time implied that the observer did not believe what he heard, and did not consider the indigenous world view as acceptable. However, this practice of exoticism was denied by authors such as Carpentier, who, being an "ontological" practitioner of magical realism, as González Echevarría calls him, believes that faith in the marvellous is necessary if one is to portray the South American primitive mentality accurately.[67] This is what produces the ambiguous nature of magical realism. While the author is educated according to our conventional norms of reason and logic, and can therefore recognize the supernatural as contrary to the laws of nature, he tries to accept the world view of a culture in order to describe it. He abolishes the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural on the level of textual representation, and the reader, who recognizes the two conflicting logical codes on the semantic level, suspends his judgment of what is rational and what is irrational in the fictitious world. This resolution of logical antinomy in the description of events and situations is our second criterion for the existence of magical realism.

In "Realismo mágico versus literatura fantástica: un diálogo de sordos", Emir Rodríquez Monegal explains that one of the reasons for so much confusion in the application of the term "magical realism" is that Angel Flores, whose article had a great impact on critics, saw magical realism as an amalgamation of realism and fantasy, while Franz Roh, and those critics who based their theories on his original definition of the concept, considered it as the description of the mystery of reality:

> En el realismo mágico los acontecimientos claves no tienen una explicación lógica o sicológica. El mágico realista no trata de copiar (como lo hacen los realistas) o de vulnerar (como lo hacen los surrealistas) la realidad circundante, sino de captar el misterio que palpita en las cosas.[68]

This echoes Luis Leal's claim that in magical realism "lo principal no es la creación de seres o mundos imaginados, sino el descubrimiento de la misteriosa relación que existe entre el hombre y su circunstancia."[69] Magical realism is considered by Lucila-Inés Mena as a way of acquiring a deeper understanding of reality:

> Hasta ahora, lo que más comúnmente se ha dado en llamar realismo mágico consiste en una cierta penetración en la realidad, de parte de algunos autores, que hace que su cosmovisión sea mas profunda, compleja y poética. Tal penetración en la realidad produce el desdoblamiento de ésta y se nos presenta entonces, no sólo el aspecto sensorial y objectivo de las cosas, sino también su lado oculto, ambiguo y misterioso.[70]

These two views of magical realism --that which sees it as the penetration of the mystery of reality, and that which sees it as an amalgamation of realism and fantasy-- are not as irreconcilable as they seem, however, Flores' position can be considered as applicable to a technique, while that of Leal describes the effect that a particular manner of writing produces on the part of the reader. The mystery of life does not exist in objective reality, but in the subjective reaction to and interpretation of the world. By presenting various different perceptions of reality, such as that of superstitious aborigines, hallucinating city dwellers and children with a vivid imagination, the narrator allows us to see dimensions of reality of which we are not normally aware. The supernatural, which is the product of an alien imagination, is juxtaposed with everyday reality in order to create a more complete picture of the world. The "amalgamation of realism and fantasy" is the means to an end, and this is the penetration of the mystery of reality. Magical realism belongs neither entirely to the domain of fantasy, by which we mean the creation of a world totally different from ours, nor to that of reality, which is our conventional everyday world. It is a type of desrealización, as Lorraine Elena Ben-Ur calls it,[71] since it destroys our conventional view of reality. González Echevarría links magical realism to the concept of deautomatization, with which the Russian Formalists referred to an inhabitual presentation of a situation or object that draws our attention to it because of its unconventionality: "Lo que varía en todos casos es el acto de percepción, que al asumir una perspectiva inusitada proyecta sobre la realidad un asombro o una devocación que hacen del gesto y del objeto un milagro. . . ."[72] The narrator transforms reality and estranges the reader from it by creating a picture which we cannot integrate within our normal codes of perception. According to Flores, the "common and the everyday" is transformed "into the awesome and unreal".[73] Anderson Imbert equates magical realism with the uncanny, or what Todorov calls l'étrange: "Un narrador mágico-realista, para crearnos la ilusión de irrealidad, finge escaparse de la naturaleza y nos cuenta una acción que por muy explicable que sea nos perturba como extraña."[74] He insists, however, that the magical realist must remain within the realm of reality, and present the real as supernatural:

> Visto con ojos nuevos a la luz de una nueva mañana, el mundo es, si no maravilloso, al menos perturbador. En los cuentos así concebidos los sucesos, siendo reales, producen la ilusión de irrealidad. La estrategia del escritor consiste en sugerir un clima sobrenatural sin apartarse de la naturaleza y su táctica es deformar la realidad en el magín de personajes neuróticos. Nuestro cuentista se entretendrá, pues, contando furores maniáticos, trances místicos, errores de percepción, pérdidas del sentido del tiempo, desdoblamientos de la personalidad, pesadillas, telepatías, paramnesias, alucinaciones, locuras. . . .[75]

Although we consider the uncanny to be a completely different category, since it refers to a certain atmosphere created in the text, and not to a mode of writing, and since it can be applied to anything that is considered as strange, even if the supernatural is not involved, Anderson Imbert's characterization of magical realism can be interpreted according to our perception of that literary mode. The "ojos nuevos" refer to an unusual and novel interpretation of reality, that the reader temporarily accepts as he pursues the narrative. The "sucesos" are not events that occur in objective reality, but ones that the narrator believes have taken place. Nahualism, as portrayed by Miguel Angel Asturias in *Hombres de maíz*, does not tell us anything about the physical reality of the Guatemalan Indians, only about their beliefs, since we do not *find out* that humans can be transformed into animals. The events are "real", but only in the characters' imagination. Since they are presented as real, however, and are logically impossible according to our code of reality, they become "unreal", or incompatible with our conventional world view. Beliefs, which actually exist, are treated as objective reality, and thus enter the domain of the supernatural. The magico-realist situations which

Anderson Imbert mentions, such as trances, errors of perception and insanity, do actually happen in everyday reality, and it is only the figments of an altered imagination that would contradict our normal view of reality if they existed outside the subjectivity of the fictitious madman or mystic. However, the portrayal of hallucinations, dreams and superstitions does not make a story into an example of magical realism, unless the imagined events are presented as objectively real. If the situation is described as a dream, the supernatural is invalidated, and the phenomenon explained. We are then in the presence of the oneiric, and not magical realism. In any case, Anderson Imbert's characterization of that mode would only hold if there is a psychological explanation evident in the text, in the event that the supernatural is introduced at all. According to him, the magico-realist world is one which has been deformed in the mind of neurotic characters. When an impossible situation is presented from the point of view of a non-dramatized narrator, however, the narrative would belong to fantasy fiction, according to this criterion. Magical realism should not be defined specifically as the juxtaposition of a realistic world and an unbelievable one that only exists in the dreams and hallucinations of strange characters. The different world view that conflicts with a rational perspective can be presented directly by the narrator, without the mediation of a dramatized perceiver. In fact, if the supernatural is obviously the result of an alien mentality, the narrator must suspend his judgment. Leal correctly points out that magical realism does not present an "análisis sicológico de los personajes, ya que no trata de explicar las motivaciones que los hacen actuar o que les prohíben expresarse."[76] If this were the case, the characters' perspective would be patently unreliable, and obviously secondary to that of the narrator. What the magical realist does, on the other hand, is to present a world view that is radically different from ours as equally valid. He neither censures nor shows surprise. This authorial reticence, or absence of obvious judgments about the veracity of the events and the authenticity of the world view expressed by characters in the text, is our third criterion for the existence of magical realism. If the narrator stressed the exclusive validity of his rational world view, he would relegate the supernatural to a secondary mode of being (the unreliable imagination of a character), and thus the juxtaposition of two mutually exclusive logical codes, which is essential to magical realism, would become a hierarchy.

Both magical realism and the fantastic are characterized by coherently developed codes of the natural and the supernatural (the degree of development of the codes distinguishes magical realism from surrealism and the fantastic from the absurd, in which an event can unexpectedly occur that contradicts the rest of the narrative). But while in the fantastic the supernatural is perceived as problematic, since it is patently antinomious with respect to the rational framework of the text, the supernatural in magical realism is accepted as part of reality. What is antinomious on the semantic level is resolved on the level of fiction. Authorial reticence plays an essential role in each of these two modes, but it fulfils a different function in both cases. While it creates an atmosphere of uncertainty and disorientation in the fantastic, it creates acceptance in magical realism. In the one, it makes the mysterious more unacceptable, and in the other, it is absorbed by the code of the natural, which must redefine its borders. In magical realism, the mere act of explaining the supernatural would eliminate its position of equivalence with respect to our conventional view of reality. Since it would then be less valid, and our criteria for what is possible in this world preclude an alternative perception of reality, the supernatural would be dismissed as false testimony. In the following three chapters we will further discuss the three criteria for the presence of the fantastic and magical realism, and provide examples from various novels and short stories from European and North and South American literature of the last two centuries, with the major emphasis on Spanish American narrative since 1945.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NATURAL VERSUS THE SUPERNATURAL

The Role of the Implied Reader, Narrator, Focalizer and Implied Author

We have already mentioned in the introduction that the presence in the text of the natural and the supernatural is the most important condition for the existence of both the fantastic and magical realism. This brings us to the following problem: what is to be defined as natural or supernatural? The norms of rationality change constantly, and what is perceived as supernatural at the moment may be explained rationally in the future. The supernatural must be seen as such by the implied reader, who is not the real reader with his individual beliefs, but a fictitious construct based entirely on the indications given by the text. This concept, which was developed by Wolfgang Iser in Der implizite Leser,[1] presupposes the study of the literary text as a system of signs, and that of the relationship between author, text and reader as a communicative process. By the term "implicit reader", as Rien T. Segers translates Iser's "implizierte Leser", "is meant the entire range of textual implications which instruct the real reader how to read. Thus, the implicit reader is a text-immanent factor which has a kind of sign character, to which real readers can react in different ways."[2] As Iser points out, the implied reader is "in der Struktur des Textes fundiert."[3] Even if the explicit textual indications are vague about whether an event is supernatural or not within a particular fictitious world, the presuppositions of the text usually provide an answer. If the narrator is rational, educated, and holds the beliefs of the majority of present day readers, then we can infer that the fictitious world he is presenting does not differ too much from ours, and that phenomena such as vampirism and lycanthropy, which do not conform to our conventional view of reality, are also to be considered as supernatural according to the norms of the narrative. The style itself can give us this information about the narrator even if the latter is unreliable. In the case of magical realism, the narrative voice may be that of a highly educated, rational and intelligent person, in spite of the fact that the narrator describes the supernatural events as if they were real. In this case, we are faced with a dual world view, which is presupposed by the narrative style and not by the information given by the narrator, and this conditions the implied reader's response to the question of whether an event is to be considered natural or supernatural. Whereas the real reader's response varies according to his cultural background, that of the implied reader is based on the text. We are not adopting a theory of reception, but one of communication, in which the effect on the addressee (the implied reader) is one of the main functions. The real reader, moreover, cannot be radically different from the construct of the implied reader if he is to understand the text. He may interpret what Roman Ingarden calls "areas of indeterminacy"[4] in different ways, but these must all conform to the norms of the text. The reader has a certain role to perform if he is to appreciate the text as a work of art. As Ingarden would put it, the reader concretizes and actualizes the schemata presented by the text. Without this active participation, there would be no work of art. Iser formulates this very succinctly in his discussion of the Leserrolle: ". . .das literarische Werk besitzt zwei Pole, die man den künstlerische den vom Autor geschaffenen Text und der ästhetische die vom Leser geleistete Konkretisation bezeichnet."[5]

This concretization is strictly limited by the indications given by the text. No matter how much the narrator tries to remain in the background, the characters and actions are presented to the reader from a certain point of view. The perceiver may be either a character within the fictitious world, or an invisible spectator. A useful term for this reflector is focalizer, which is preferable not because it lacks the visual connotations of point of view or perspective as Gérard Genette claims, since "point of view" is rarely taken in this restricted sense in literary criticism, but because of its linguistic practicality. We can coin other terms such as focalization (the act performed by the focalizer) and the verb focalize. This concept was elaborated by Genette in Figures III[6] as part of his discussion of the mode of narration. According to him, a non-focalized narrative is one in which an omniscient narrator knows more than the characters (focalisation zéro); focalisation interne occurs when the narrator adopts the view of a particular character; and focalisation externe permits the narrator to describe only the actions and external appearances, but not the thoughts, of a character. Mieke Bal, in an article entitled "Narration et focalisation: Pour une théorie des instances du récit",[7] objects that Genette makes no distinction between who is focalizing and who or what is focalized. This leads to much confusion, which could be eliminated if one were to differentiate between focalisation sur and focalisation par: in other words, between the object and the subject of focalization. For example, if a scene is the object of a character's observation, then he focalizes the scene (focalisation sur), whereas the scene itself is focalized by the character (focalisation par). This is a valuable distinction, and Bal is also quite correct in pointing out that focalization is always present in any description, and that Genette's focalisation zéro does not exist. But this does not invalidate Genette's distinction between external and internal focalization. A tripartition similar to that of Genette was already established by Jean Pouillon in Temps et roman in 1946.[8] His vision par derrière corresponds to Genette's focalisation zéro, in which the narrator is omniscient; vision avec is analogous to internal focalization; and vision du dehors is equivalent to external focalization. It is important to distinguish between the various types of focalization, such as the focalization by an invisible spectator of a character's thoughts, or merely of his external appearance. One must analyse not only who focalizes, but also how he focalizes, since the manner of focalization largely determines the reader response.

An example of the role of the focalizer in determining whether something is perceived as supernatural by the implied reader is the description of the Indians' fear of aeroplanes in Chapter 33 of Alejo Carpentier's Los pasos perdidos. The natives, who have never seen such inventions, are "aterrorizados", and "aúllan de miedo".[9] Although they perceive the aeroplane as supernatural, the reader cannot share their reaction since the focalizer is not the Indian population but the white protagonist. The Indians are the object, not the subject, of focalization. If the focalizer were an Indian who has never seen an aeroplane and who describes the phenomenon as supernatural, and if the narrator assumed the beliefs of this focalizer throughout the novel, thereby not presenting the focalization by the natives as secondary and invalid within the framework of the narrative, the role of the reader would be to react as the narrative code demanded and also wonder at the phenomenon. Another example of the primary focalizer's invalidation of wonder in face of the unknown is the description of the villagers' reaction to the experiments of José Arcadio Buendía in Gabriel García Márquez' Cien años de soledad.[10] In spite of the populace's bewilderment at the inventions and new ideas, the reader shares the opinion of the primary focalizer (an invisible spectator whose point of view the narrator adopts), who does not perceive these phenomena as supernatural. When, on the other hand, the focalizer considers impossible events as quite normal, thereby appearing as a superstitious person instead of an educated man who understands the experiments of Buendía, the focalization, conveyed by the narrative voice, also determines the reactions of the implied reader, even though the identity of the focalizer has changed drastically. An example of this is the ascension of Remedios la Bella, which is described in a matter-of-fact way that causes no bewilderment on the part of the characters or the implied reader.[11] Again, wonder is made impossible, in spite of the fact that the phenomenon is clearly supernatural. In this passage, the focalizer places a supernatural event on the same level as an ordinary occurrence, and the narrative voice fuses the two levels (the logically impossible ascension and the prosaic washing on the line).

The description of a supernatural event as normal eliminates the antinomy between the real and the supernatural on the level of the text, and therefore also resolves it on the level of the implied reader. Although the latter still perceives this antinomy, he suspends his normal reactions of wonder to conform to the requirements of the textual code. If the abnormal is described as normal, then the reader response is determined accordingly. An antinomy which exists on the semantic level is resolved in the act of reading if the focalizer does not perceive it and if the narrator invalidates the contradiction between the real and the impossible by describing both kinds of phenomena in the same way. It is this resolution of semantic antinomy on the level of focalization which characterises magical realism.

In the early stages of Spanish American magico-realist writing, the focalizer had a definite identity. He believed in the myths and superstitions of the Indians, and interpreted the world he lived in according to a primitive and archaic mentality. Whether this world view coincided exactly with a particular indigenous group is of no importance. What matters is that the focalizer has a coherent _Weltanschauung_. In Miguel Angel Asturias' _Hombres de maíz_, it is the author's interpretation of the Mayas and the _Popol Vuh_. In an interview with Günther W. Lorenz, he expounds his views on the indigenous world view:

> Un indio o un mestizo, habitante de un pequeño pueblo, cuenta haber visto cómo una nube o una piedra enorme se transformó en una persona o en un gigante o que la nube se convirtió en una piedra. Todos estos son fenómenos alucinatorios que se dan frecuentemente entre las personas de los pueblitos. Por supuesto uno se ríe del relato y no lo cree. Pero cuando se vive entre ellos, uno percibe que estas historias adquieren peso. Las alucinaciones, las impresiones que el hombre obtiene de su medio tienden a transformarse en

> realidades, sobre todo allí donde existe una determinada base religiosa y de culto, como en el caso de los indios. No se trata de una realidad palpable, pero sí de una realidad que surge de una determinada imaginación mágica. Por ello, al expresarlo, lo llamo "realismo mágico". . . . Entre la relidad que podría llamarse la "realidad real" y la "realidad mágica" tal como la viven los hombres, esiste una tercera realidad que no es sólo producto de lo visible y palpable, no sólo alucinación y sueño, sino la resultante de la fusión de las otras dos.[12]

Although magical realism is considered by Asturias to be the fusion of reality and imagination by the primitive Indian population, it is in fact a particular way of writing for an author who obviously does not believe in supernatural phenomena. For him there is a distinction between the real and the supernatural, but in his writings he fuses these two antinomic levels in a coherent structure, which he believes to be that of the Guatemalan Indians' world view.

It is at this point that we must stress the importance of the distinction between the implied author and the focalizer. Since Asturias seems successful in fusing the views of the implied author and the focalizer, it is easier to demonstrate this distinction in Alejo Carpentier's El reino de este mundo.[13] In the frequently commented scene of Mackandal's execution, we have at first an apparently perfect example of magical realism. Before describing the actual execution, the narrator adopts the view of the Haitian negroes and informs the reader through free indirect discourse that Mackandal has already undergone several metamorphoses, and that he will transform himself into a mosquito in order to escape death at the stake. The scene is focalized by the negro multitude, who is certain that Mackandal will be saved, since he is protected by their gods. The

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A constant shift in focalization, together with a continual modulation of narrative voice, enables the reader to perceive the events of the scene in various ways: as a negro sympathizer and believer in their cult, as a white and prejudiced slave-owner, and finally as an impartial bystander, who takes a sceptical view of the opinions of both the blacks and the whites. The latter position is that of the implied author, who gives the reader information which invalidates the observations of the characters. If the text provides a rational explanation of Mackandal's attempted escape, the reader cannot adopt the point of view of the blacks, who ascribe it to his extraordinary powers. Neither can he miss the explicit sarcasm of the narrative voice in the description of the white masters. Although the focalizer is frequently a negro who believes in lycanthropy and other supernatural powers (the final paragraphs of the novel are an example of consistent focalization of this kind), the reader reacts sceptically to this because of the type of information given to him by the implied author and the attitude conveyed by the narrative voice. If the identity of the focalizer remained consistent throughout the novel, and if this character or invisible spectator believed in the indigenous cults, El reino de este mundo would be an example of magical realism. As it is, the novel is unsatisfactory in its presentation of a coherent magical world view and appears more like a literary exercise in which the fluctuating focalization renders the obvious interest in exoticism more original. The ambiguous mode of narration, in which an obviously sceptical narrator periodically adopts the point of view of the superstitious slaves, only to invalidate it by his patent inability to identify completely with the negroes, is appropriate for the portrayal of the character of Ti Noel, from whose point of view most of the story is presented. The black protagonist still adheres to the beliefs of his race, but he has lived with the whites long enough to understand their way of thinking. Since the implied author is incapable of fully identifying with the negroes, the reader always remains sceptical about the supernatural world in which they believe. This novel fulfils none of the conditions posited for the existence of either magical realism or the fantastic. The supernatural exists neither for the implied author, who can explain everything rationally, nor for the negroes, who consider what we call supernatural as normal. The antinomy between the natural and the supernatural does not exist for them; nor does it exist on the semantic level, since the implied author never creates a consistent code of the supernatural.[14]

The Natural and the Supernatural in Magical Realism

Since the implied author in a modern novel always betrays his disbelief in the supernatural by the simple fact that he is an educated and literary man who lives in an age which clearly distinguishes between reality and fantasy, his adoption of the world view of an unreliable focalizer such as a superstitious inhabitant of Latin America is invariably ambiguous. The learning which his style and narrative technique presuppose is contradictory to an archaic mentality. This ambiguity must be disguised so that the reader can identify with the focalizer. In El reino de este mundo, the lack of authorial reticence with regard to the credibility of the negroes only underscores this ambiguity. In Hombres de maíz, on the other hand, the author successfully creates a coherent world view, according to which events that are plausible by our standards of verisimilitude are considered to be on the same ontological level as those which are clearly perceived as supernatural. The author never intrudes with a rational explanation of an irrational belief. Although his style inevitably reveals his own cultural background, the manner of focalization enables the reader to identify with the protagonists, in spite of the fact that their beliefs are completely different from his. Wayne Booth's remark that "even the greatest of literature is radically dependent on the concurrence of beliefs of authors and readers"[15] is obviously not applicable to magical realism, in which the author demands that the reader accept a world view that he would normally reject. In order to appreciate the narrative as a work of art, the reader of Hombres de maíz must adopt the role of identifying with the Indians, whether he believes, as Asturias does, that the world view presented by the novel is really that of the Indians, or merely a fiction based on fact. Nor does the reader have to believe that this is an alternative and legitimate way of interpreting reality which happens to differ from our rational way of thinking. He is asked merely to judge the ability of the author to depict a fictitious world that is consistent with the norms of that particular narrative. Since Asturias is able to maintain a coherent world view, the reader has a different role to play than in El reino de este mundo. His function is not only to understand the mentality of the Indians, but to perform a specific act of reading in which he temporarily adopts their way of thinking, and conceptualizes the fictitious scenes and events according to their perspective. He never questions whether something is logically possible or not, since those phenomena which he would usually consider as supernatural are described as normal and plausible according to the code of the text. On the ontological level, there is a constant antinomy between the natural and the supernatural, but on the textual level this antinomy is resolved, even if a close stylistic analysis would immediately reveal the ambiguity present in any magico-realist narrative. Since no rational focalizer invalidates the authenticity of the phenomena as perceived by the indigenous protagonists, the reader enters into a clearly defined and unambiguous "contract" with the author.[16]

The poetic and highly stylized language of the first chapter of Hombres de maíz prevents the reader from analysing the narrated events and thoughts on an empirical level.[17] The first three sentences appear like an incantation, with their personification of the earth, regular rhythm and repetitious wording. This passage plunges the reader straight into the novel's mythical imagery and offers no explanation of the meaning of these images. An explanatory introduction would introduce a rationalizing narrator and destroy the effect of unmediated focalization by a "primitive mentality". The speaker of the first lines is only identified as the earth, and the message is the "acusación del suelo" directed to the Indian leader Gaspar Ilóm. In the next few paragraphs, the lyrical description of the surrounding countryside contains several indications of "real" events, such as the burning of vegetation and drying up of the rivers. There is no difference in narrative voice, however, between the description of the destruction of the forests by the maiceros and that of the mythical serpent, the symbol of the earth, which persuades Gaspar Ilóm to take action: he is "atado de sueño y muerte por la culebra de seiscientas mil vueltas de lodo, luna, bosques, aguaceros, montañas, lagos, pájaros y retumbos que le martajaba los huesos hasta convertirlo en una masa de frijol negro" (p.465). This lyrical fusion of myth and reality by the narrator prevents the reader from distinguishing between the two levels. The style is thus of utmost importance, as Ariel Dorfman explains:

> El lenguaje exacerbado, su barroca sintaxis de serpiente, un mundo que avanza culebreando, unión de elementos disímiles, transfiguración por medio del verbo, sagrado, solemne, lejano, entrevisión de lo que sucede, todo recrea en la mente del lector el proceso del primitivismo envolvente que el personaje mismo está viviendo, y fuerza a nivelar el sueño y la realidad, lleva a mezclar ficción y factum sin poder --y sin querer-- separarlos.[18]

The supernatural events in the following chapters, such as the marvellous disappearance of Tomás Machojón's son in a cloud of fireflies and his parents' death as fulfilment of the curse of the brujos de las luciérnagas, the mysterious ties between man and his protective animal or nahual and the metamorphosis of the courier Nicho Aquino into a coyote, are all accepted without questioning by the implied reader, as they are presented in a matter-of-fact way by a focalizer who believes in them.

The supernatural events described in a magico-realist narrative belong to an ideological code in which they are not perceived as supernatural. In Asturias' novel, this code is that of the "primitivism" of the Indians, of their archaic and superstitious world view as seen by the author. However, if we limited magical realism to that kind of narrative in which such a code is present, the term would be useless, since most writing that is commonly considered as magico-realist would be excluded from this category. From the structural point of view, moreover, there is no difference between the resolved or fused antinomy of Asturias' narrative, and that of a story in which normal and plausible events coexist on the same level as supernatural ones, even if the latter are not part of the beliefs of an entire culture. To a Western reader, the metamorphosis of a man into a coyote is just as impossible as the act of vomiting rabbits in Julio Cortázar's short story "Carta a una señorita en París".[19] In this story, the unmediated focalization of the supernatural events leads the reader to accept the preposterous situation described by the narrator. He does not question its authenticity, and reconstructs the fusion of the real and the absurd as it is presented by the protagonist. When the reader analyses the significance of this strange perception on the part of the narrator, he may conclude that the supernatural events did not take place at all, and that they are mere figments of the imagination of an insane person. The narrator is then seen as unreliable, and there is no validity in the question as to whether the events really occurred or not. The reader accepts them, just as he accepts the account of Nicho Aquino's metamorphosis in _Hombres de maíz_. His role is to reconcile the natural and the supernatural in a coherent code, whether it be that of an entire culture, or that of a psychotic individual with a diseased imagination.

Whether we consider the treatment of the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural in Cortázar's story as an example of the development of magical realism, or merely as a variation of the same basic mode of writing, they are both characterized by the same essential structure. The supernatural, as most contemporary readers perceive it, is presented without any explanation, as if it were part of our everyday world. It is not even described as something extraordinary, and is usually introduced casually into the narrative. At the beginning of Cortázar's story, the protagonist sends a letter to the owner of an apartment in which he is temporarily staying, and explains his discomfort at having to conform to the strict order imposed by the meticulous disposition of the objects in the rooms. He rebels against the restrictions of his liberty in this "orden cerrado, construido ya hasta en las más finas mallas del aire" (p.19), and mentions the additional inconvenience of the "conejitos". After describing his preparations for moving into the apartment, he progresses without any transition to the account of the little rabbits which he periodically vomits. This absurd occurrence is narrated as if it were absolutely normal and understandable: "Justo entre el primero y segundo piso sentí que iba a vomitar un conejito. Nunca se lo había explicado antes, no crea que por deslealtad, pero naturalmente uno no va a ponerse a explicarle a la gente que de cuando en cuando vomita un conejito" (p.21). Whatever psychological explanations one may offer as to the meaning of the protagonist's obsession, the fact remains that the supernatural events are presented without the mediation of a rational narrator who invalidates their authenticity. The reader can only perceive the situation from the point of view of the protagonist, since no other focalizer is present. If the reader adheres to the code of the text as presented by the focalizer, he cannot legitimately discard the events as pure imagination and interpret them symbolically. He must accept them literally, as he would if he were reading a fairy tale. Both of these modes of writing can be interpreted symbolically, however, if the reader analyses certain details pertaining to the general semantic implications of the narrative. In the case of Cortázar's story, the falsely repentant language of the narrator, the continual complaints about his restriction of freedom, his obvious delight in describing the havoc that the rabbits have wrought on the furnishings of the apartment, and his general neurotic behaviour, justify the reader's examination of the focalizer himself and conclusion that he rebels against the rigid order of society that has driven him insane. But this interpretation, although necessary for a full explication of the story, is only secondary to the *object* of focalization, in an obvious hierarchy of meaning.[20] The primary interest lies in the plot, in the masterful account of absolutely absurd events in a perfectly realistic setting.

It is this presence of a realistic framework that constitutes the primary difference between magical realism and pure fantasy, such as that found in fairy tales and various modern "literary divertissements". Not only is the story set in a normal, contemporary world, but it also contains many realistic descriptions of man and society. In Asturias' novel, we see the injustice of the exploitation of the Indians and their land, the problems facing an Indian *ladino* when he collaborates with the whites (see the chapter on Tomás Machojón), the conditions inside the prison where Nicho Aquino is confined, and many other situations which may well arise in a realistic novel. Cortázar's narrator describes in great detail the interior of the apartment, the increasing problems he faces at work, and the destruction caused by the rabbits. This realistic detail is essential to magical realism, but it is impossible to determine the borderline between sufficient and insufficient realism. Any definition of a literary mode or genre is useful only if it is considered as a reading code or a guideline which is not too vague, and yet not so inflexible that it applies to a very limited number of narratives. There will be many cases where a particular work may fit into various categories, or where it does not really fit into any. In the case of magical realism, there are many such borderline narratives. "El leve Pedro" by the Argentine writer Enrique Anderson Imbert,[21] is a story in which there is too little realistic detail for it to be considered a model example. The plot is without any complicated ramifications, and the description of the events is as brief as possible. The narrator only tells us that Pedro, after a grave and undisclosed illness in which he lost a lot of weight, suddenly feels lighter every day until he finally "falls" into the sky. The event is no more absurd than the plague of rabbits in Cortázar's story, and yet there seems to be a great difference between the two narratives. Whereas the first person protagonist/narrator inhabits an obviously contemporary, well-defined world which is described with many realistic details, Pedro is hardly characterized, lives in a place which is so vague that it could be anywhere, and suffers an ailment that is depicted in only very broad outlines. The style is not that of psychological realism, as in the case of Cortázar's story, but that of a fairy tale. The story is told by a third person narrator who gives us only the bare essentials of the plot and adheres to a "restricted" focalization where the reader is not told what the characters are thinking, except when these thoughts are verbalized in direct dialogue.[22] The protagonists are more like fairy tale figures, with a minimum of characterization, than complex literary characters, such as in the case of "Carta a una señorita en París" with its dramatized narrator.

Whereas "El leve Pedro" is a borderline case between an absurd anecdote and a magico-realist story because of a lack of realistic detail in the depiction of the level of the natural, the short narrative "El sofá", also by Anderson Imbert,[23] falls into the same indefinable category because of lack of detail on the level of the supernatural. Since the framework of the story is exclusively realistic, it does not prepare the reader for a supernatural dénouement. The order to manufacture a sofa for a hotel room in which two film stars will be staying, the realization of the cabinet-maker that the actress is his former wife, the meticulous preparations of the ex-husband who builds the sofa in such a way that he will be able to hide inside, be smuggled into the room and kill the two lovers, and his suffering at seeing the happiness of the intended victims from his hiding-place, set the scene for a realistic story of betrayal and revenge. The sudden shrinking of the hidden man until he has reached the dimensions of a cockroach and is crushed by his ex-wife's lover is perceived as an absurd departure from the norms of the story. There is no supernatural level coexisting with the natural from the beginning of the narrative, but a perfectly realistic story with an absurd ending which lacks a coherent perspective, except from the point of view of literary symbolism.

This example illustrates the importance of a well defined code of the supernatural in magical realism. The narrator must provide a consistent point of view so that the reader can accept the incredible. Such is the case with Franz Kafka's "Die Verwandlung" ("The Metamorphosis"), where the first sentence introduces the absurd subject of the story, which is told with great realistic detail. The introduction immediately sets the tone for the entire narrative: "Als Gregor Samsa eines Morgens aus unruhigen Träumen erwachte, fand er sich in seinem Bett zu einem ungeheueren Ungeziefer verwandelt".[24] The description of the metamorphosis itself is so matter-of-fact and detailed, that the reader unreservedly accepts the incredible event. The insect into which the protagonist has been transformed is described as having a back as hard as armour, a rounded, brown belly and innumerable legs. Samsa's surroundings, which are perfectly normal, are also described in detail: his small room and its table covered with samples of material used by the travelling salesman, the picture in its golden frame and the rain outside are typical elements of a realistic setting. Samsa's hideous transformation does not produce a reaction of surprise on the part of the other characters so much as one of horror at his ugly form, and consternation about the consequences. The metamorphosis is therefore perceived as a sad and shameful event, and the reader's response is determined by the focalization, both by the protagonist and by the family.

"Die Verwandlung" is undoubtedly a very different type of magical realism from that found in Hombres de maíz or "Carta a una señorita en París". In both Latin American narratives, the focalizers have a definite identity and are characterized by a particular world view. Although the reader must accept the role of identifying with the focalizer in order to understand the fictitious world, he ultimately considers the narrator as unreliable, or in any case, as having a different perception of reality. He willingly adopts the point of view of the Indians or the insane protagonist of Cortázar's story, but if he were to analyse the semantic content of the narratives, he would be able to distinguish between the natural and the supernatural, and ascribe the different way of thinking of the focalizer to a particular type of mentality. This is the case whether a third person narrator adopts the position of various focalizers, or whether the main focalizer is also a first person narrator, as is "Carta a una señorita en París". In "Die Verwandlung" however, the protagonist and primary focalizer is a normal, rational travelling salesman, who neither believes in mystical powers, nor suffers from a stage of advanced psychosis. The supernatural event which occurs is described in great detail by Gregor himself, and is obviously accepted by the other members of the family. That the metamorphosis is not a mere figment of Gregor's imagination is obvious at the end of the story, when the grieving relatives experience a joyous sense of relief at the salesman's death. The extraordinary transformation is thus authenticated by the third person narrator, not only when he adopts the focalization of Gregor, but also when he shifts his point of view to that of the parents. This tragedy is consistently described throughout the story, but it is impossible to ascribe the events to a particular world view, as in the case of Asturias or Cortázar. The extraordinary event seems entirely absurd, without any foundation either in the cultural background of a certain people, or in the mind of an insane man. It is the original creation of an author who realizes that in fiction everything is possible, and that it is unnecessary to base his imagination on tradition. Although it differs in these respects from the two Latin American narratives, it is still an example of magical realism, since both the natural and the supernatural are present, and both are fused in a consistent perspective.

In the case of the narratives discussed up to this point, most readers would have no difficulty in recognizing the presence of the supernatural. The problem arises when the fictitious world can be neither clearly rejected, nor accepted. Much occultist writing falls into this category. Whereas most readers would not lend credence to tales of reincarnation, metempsychosis or telepathy, there are many people who believe in these phenomena. The latter kind of reader would obviously not consider a story about such things as magico-realist, but as quite realistic. From his point of view, there is therefore no fusion of the natural and the supernatural, since the supernatural simply does not exist in these narratives. Is it legitimate, however, to define a mode of writing according to the beliefs of individual readers? If it were, the definition would be entirely subjective and useless. The presence of the implied reader in the text partially solves this problem. Although an author may sincerely believe in occultism, and address his story to receptive minds, the reader implied by the text believes in conventional norms of reason, and thus differs from the intended reader. Since any definition of the supernatural is ultimately based on the beliefs of a certain culture, it will always be arbitrary from an absolute point of view, but less so than if it depended entirely on the individual. A general consensus must be reached if one is to be able to define anything. Since most educated readers in this day and age do not believe in occult phenomena, then these should be considered as supernatural, that is, something which contradicts the laws of nature as we know them. This kind of definition is of course relative, since the supernatural may be defined quite differently in the future; but for our purposes, we define "supernatural" in this way, and consider occult phenomena as such.

Whether the intent of the author is to demonstrate the possibility of a certain occult event in which he firmly believes, or whether it is merely to base his literary creation on concepts of occultism he does not believe in, the resulting text is not necessarily affected by these intentions, although excessive authorial justification and explanatory comments may be detrimental to its quality. In both cases there is a fusion of the natural and the supernatural which the reader must recreate according to the code of the text. An exception to this is occultist writing in which the author painstakingly and pseudoscientifically explains the supernatural phenomena: in this case we have a treatise on demonology, metempsychosis, or any other aspect of the occult. The narrative must be written as a literary text, and not as a document or as a scientific demonstration of a principle. These are simply occultist writings, with none of the effect of magico-realist narratives.

An example of magical realism which is on the borderline of occultist literature, but still falls within the category of the former because of its status as a literary text, is the greater part of Adolfo Bioy Casares' writing. The supernatural events in his stories and novels usually belong to the domain of occultism with their emphasis on telepathy, the simultaneous existence of several planes of being and metempsychosis. "En memoria de Paulina"[25] begins as a realistic story about a common situation --that of a rival who wins the affection of a woman who has been the beloved of another man since childhood. The level of the supernatural is introduced right from the beginning, when the protagonist and first person narrator expounds on the identity of the souls of Paulina and himself: "Nos parecimos tan milagrosamente que en un libro sobre la final reunión de las almas en el alma del mundo, mi amiga escribió en el margen: Las nuestras ya se reunieron" (p.7). When he discovers that Paulina could not possibly have visited him on his return from Paris because she had been murdered two years ago by her new admirer Montero, he is not at all surprised at her apparition, which he considers as a quite natural occurrence: "Lo cierto es que Paulina me visitó anoche. Murió sabiendo que el matrimonio con Montero había sido una equivocación --una equivocación atroz-- y que nosotros éramos la verdad. Volvió desde la muerte. . ." (p.20). This explanation is given with such certainty that the reader does not question the incredible event, since it obviously belongs to the code of the story, in which the natural and supernatural are fused. When the protagonist suddenly realizes that this is not the right explanation and that Paulina's ghost never came to visit him, the new explanation he gives is accepted just as readily by the reader. It was not Paulina's spirit which had visited him, but the "monstruoso fantasma de los celos de mi rival" (p.21). He reconstructs the occurrence in great detail and deduces this explanation from various circumstances. Whether the reader considers the apparition as a hallucination or dream of the protagonist, or whether he accepts the possibility of the transmission of thoughts and images between two people, is immaterial for the classification of the story as magico-realist. There are definitely two levels of reality according to our definition, even though these are not presented as antinomious in the text. The focalization throughout the story is consistent, and the focalizer, whose thoughts are given to us directly by a first person narrator, has a homogeneous conception of the world, in which the souls of the deceased can visit the living, and thoughts can be transmitted. The extraordinary events which occur in the narratives of Bioy Casares are all supernatural from our point of view, but perfectly plausible in the fictitious world of his stories. The preservation of a dead man's spirit within a small gadget ("Los afanes"),[26] the transmission of thoughts and their projection into somebody else's dreams ("Moscas y arañas"),[27] the existence of a man on two simultaneous levels of being ("La trama celeste")[28] and the transformation of a human being into a diminutive creature ("La sierva ajena")[29] are all supernatural events which are narrated as if they were quite possible, even if out of the ordinary and slightly mystifying. They all occur in a contemporary and normal world with its usual variety of common problems and preoccupations, and this places the stories well within the realm of magical realism.

Another kind of narrative which may be linked with this mode is one in which an extraordinary, even if not exactly supernatural, event is focalized by an unreliable narrator. The event, although highly implausible, is accepted by the reader in the same way as the vomiting of rabbits in "Carta a una señorita en París". In Cortázar's "Bestiario",[30] the strange presence of the tiger in the Funes' house is never explained, but introduced casually as if it were quite normal. When Inés voices her apprehensions about young Isabel's stay in the Funes' house, she does not even seem particularly worried about the tiger's presence: "A mí, créeme que no me gusta que vaya --dijo Inés--. No tanto por el tigre, después de todo cuidan bien ese aspecto. Pero la casa tan triste, y ese chico solo para jugar con ella. . ." (p.139). The animal is a menace in the house, and one member of the family must always find out where the tiger is so that the others can enter the room in safety. Why the family keeps a tiger is never explained, and the fact that they cannot lock it up or do anything to eliminate the danger is even more extraordinary. It is seen as a mysterious presence in the house, but accepted as unavoidable. Isabel is afraid to ask Rema anything about the tiger, because the latter "parecía encontrar en eso algo tan obvio y necesario" (p.155). The girl, however, realizes that in spite of Nino's explanations, she has not been able to solve the mystery, since "las razones importantes continuaban faltando" (p.156). The tiger is never described by any member of the family, or even by the primary focalizer Isabel, and the reader wonders whether such an animal exists at all in the house, or whether it is just an obsession on the part of the whole family. After Isabel has given false information as to the whereabouts of the tiger and Nene has entered the library, which is empty according to the testimony of the young girl, the family hears screams from Nene, Luis knocking on the door of the library and don Roberto with his dogs, trying to get to the victim. It is obvious that an accident has taken place, and the indications of the story lead one to interpret it as an attack by the ferocious tiger. Although the situation can be understood symbolically, it is presented as true on the literal level as well, according to the focalizer and the narrator. No indication in the story permits one to think the contrary. As far as the referential level of the narrative is concerned, a tiger really exists. Since its presence is so implausable and inexplicable, however, the reader sees it as something unreal, even if not supernatural. Even if he accepts it according to the code of the story, the situation in itself, and not in the context of a fictitious world where anything is permitted, is seen as highly unlikely. The tiger's presence and menace is as inexplicable as the transformation of a man into a coyote, and whereas the unreal cannot be equated with the supernatural, the structure of two antinomious codes which are fused in the narrative is very much like that of the magico-realist works discussed so far. Cortázar's "Omnibus",[31] in which the aggressive behaviour of the passengers on the bus towards Carla is perceived as extraordinary and quite improbable, would also fit into this category, in which the inexplicable event or situation is not merely the obsession of a particular individual, but endorsed by an impersonal narrator, described realistically, and set in a normal and plausible framework. If stories of this type were discarded from the mode of magical realism, it would be very difficult to find another category for them. They are not examples of the fantastic, of science fiction, of the occult, or of pure fantasy, so it is only reasonable to take into account the similarities between them and more conventional magico-realist narratives.

What we have attempted in this chapter is to discuss and clarify various types of magical realism, analyse the mode in general, and examine the importance of the presence and fusion in the text of the natural and supernatural. On the basis of these antinomious codes, we have established something like a typology, which is far from complete. It is not a thematic taxinomy, but a typology based on certain narratological criteria. Since the perception of the code of the supernatural is determined by the focalizer and communicated to us by the narrator, it is important to analyse the identity of the focalizer, and the narrative voice. It is not the supernatural motifs in themselves that distinguish one magico-realist work from another, but the coherent world view presented by the narrator. In Asturias' Hombres de maíz, the identity of the focalizer is easy to establish. He is an indigenous inhabitant of Guatemala who believes in the superstitions of his forefathers, and is at the same time acutely aware of the social problems he must face. Sorcerers and nahuals are considered by him as part of his everyday world, and he interprets his surroundings according to a definite code of archaic thought. In Cortázar's stories, the supernatural is not a social phenomenon shared by a whole culture, but a psychological and individual creation, even though it may be rooted in a particular ethnic group. Whether the events are actually supernatural or merely unnatural, as in "Bestiario", is a more important, yet often more difficult, distinction, than that between the supernatural described by a first person unreliable narrator, and that presented by a third person narrator who adopts the focalization of the characters, such as in Kafka's "Die Verwandlung". The focalizer may believe in the occult as a means of broadening our experience, but still be a sane, educated and balanced individual, as in Bioy Casares' stories. The type of narration is an important way of distinguishing between the various kinds of magical realism. Anderson Imbert's "El leve Pedro" is seen as a borderline case because the narrator does not supply sufficient realistic details. He tells the story as if it were a fairy tale, with minimum characterization and description. In Kafka's story, on the contrary, the narrator gives us many detailed descriptions of actions, setting and character. Hombres de maíz is written in a highly poetic, expressionistic and surrealistic manner, which contrasts sharply with the precise and more objective type of narration in "Die Verwandlung". In these two narratives, the natural and the supernatural are presented in different ways by the narrator, and they also belong to different codes of perception on the part of the focalizer, but they are both examples of magical realism.

In order to define a story as magico-realist, it is not a sufficient condition that the natural and the supernatural are present in the text. The degree of presence of these two codes is essential in determining to which mode a particular narrative belongs. If there is insufficient realistic detail, the story tends towards the fairy tale or other types of pure fantasy. If the supernatural does not constitute a coherent code, it is perceived as out of place or absurd, or as a dream or hallucination within a realistic narrative. A dream about the supernatural, narrated in the form of free indirect discourse within the framework of a realistic novel, does not transform the narrative into an example of magical realism.

The Natural and the Supernatural in the Fantastic

As in magical realism, the degree to which the natural and the supernatural are present in the text is of utmost importance in the fantastic.

If a supernatural event is introduced at the beginning of the narrative and not mentioned again, the effect of this extraordinary phenomenon is quickly destroyed. In Cazotte's Le Diable amoureux (1772),[32] which is considered to be the first fantastic narrative by critics such as Todorov and Bessière, the apparition of the devil in the ruins and his subsequent transformation from a hideous camel into a spaniel and then into a beautiful young woman is perceived as an utterly improbable beginning hardly connected with the rest of the narrative, in which the adventures of a young couple are described. Although Alvare knows that his beloved Biondetta is actually the devil, she behaves like a normal human being, is emotionally and physically vulnerable, and gives no indications that she is the devil in disguise. Even when we are told at the end of the story that Biondetta admits she is the devil and temporarily changes into a monstrous camel again, there is little apparent unity in the narrative, except on the symbolic level. Alvare himself wonders whether he has been the victim of an illusion.

Although Le Diable amoureux is certainly a fantastic story, the code of the supernatural is not maintained throughout the book, and the reader is not constantly reminded of the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural. Prosper Mérimée's "La Vénus d'Ille",[33] on the contrary, is a remarkably effective example of the interplay between the two codes. The reader can never forget the presence of the supernatural, although the story is narrated in the most realistic manner possible. The first person narrator, a distinguished and erudite archaeologist, stands in continual contrast to the beliefs of the superstitious peasants and the extraordinary occurrences in the story. The motif of the supernatural is introduced right at the beginning, when a Catalan peasant tells the visiting French archaeologist about the idol which has recently been unearthed. The peasant is convinced that the Roman statue has evil and mysterious qualities: "On dirait qu'elle vous dévisage. . . . Elle a l'air méchante. . .et elle l'est aussi" (p.89). According to him, the idol broke the leg of a peasant, a conviction shared by the host's wife and by a young lout who hurls a stone at the statue. The first mysterious event witnessed by the archaeologist is the violent rebounding of the stone, which injures the young boy on the head. Even though the boy is convinced that the idol deliberately threw the stone at him, the narrator rationalizes the event and explains that it is "évident que la pierre avait rebondi sur le métal, et avait puni ce drôle de l'outrage qu'il faisait à la déesse" (p.96). He completely dismisses the superstitions of the peasants, and since we see him as a reliable narrator, we share his point of view. But when he himself admits that the statue has a "caractère étrange", and expresses "malice arrivant jusqu'à la méchanceté", "quelque chose de féroce" and an "ironie infernale" (pp.97-98), the reader no longer accepts the narrator's angry dismissal of his own reactions, but dissociates the narrator from the implied author who is making him constantly more aware of the code of the supernatural. The superstitious fear of the bride about marrying on a Friday, the association of this day with Venus, and therefore with the maleficent statue and its "diabolique figure" (p.106), combined with the terror of the groom Alphonse who claims that the statue tensed her finger so that he could not remove the ring he had placed on it while he was playing tennis, constantly refer to the level of the supernatural. When the narrator dismisses the allegations of Alphonse about the statue's desire to keep his ring since she is now his bride, the reader cannot share his certainty that the groom only believes this because he is drunk. The mysterious death of the groom, which appears to have been caused by a huge iron circle crushing his chest, the absence of any rational explanation of his murder, and the declaration of his wife that she had seen the statue kill him, affirm the presence of the supernatural, even if the narrator and his host remain sceptical about the irrational explanation which seems, however, to be the only satisfactory one according to the code of the story. The theme of the supernatural is developed subtly and convincingly throughout the narrative.

Whereas Mérimée painstakingly introduces the supernatural by means of the unreliable testimony of characters in the story, constant allusions to the strangeness of the statue, and the reliable narrator's admission of uneasiness about it, the first person narrator of Anderson Imbert's "Viento norte"[34] starts immediately with a reference to the uncanny. A "fuerza inexplicable" (p.21) impells Masaccio to draw a sketch of a convict being sentenced. Since he has never been in court, nor seen a man resembling the figure in his drawing, he is bewildered by the content of the sketch, and feels as if it had been drawn by someone other than himself, "que se había metido en el cuerpo de Masaccio y desde adentro le conducía el brazo" (p.21). The realism of the setting and the detailed features of the criminal surprise him just as much, since Masaccio is an illustrator. When the artist enters the workshop of an engraver of tombstones because he is astonished at hearing the blows of a chisel when everyone else is sleeping the siesta, he is horrified at recognizing the sculptor as the criminal in the sketch he has just drawn. Even more inexplicable is the coincidence that the sculptor Donatello is working on a gravestone with Masaccio's name and dates of birth and death engraved on it. When Masaccio attempts to clarify the mystery of his sketch by asking Donatello if he has ever been in court, the sculptor becomes furious at what he considers to be insulting insinuations and a breach of hospitality. Inebriated and irritable because of the 45°C temperatures, Donatello murders his visitor with a chisel, thus fulfilling the destiny that Masaccio had himself portrayed in his drawing, and the fate that the tombstone had predicted. The code of the supernatural can be interpreted in various ways. If we accept the explanation of the dramatized narrator of the story, the event was an "embrollo de tiempos: todavía en el pasado cierto presente fue ya un futuro. . . . Un misterioso cataclismo cósmico. Las vidas de Masaccio y Donatello se entreveraron, como si dos trenes que corrieran paralelamente descarrilasen, saltasen de las vías, chocasen en el aire y cayesen entrecruzados" (p.29). We may also see it as the mysterious force of fate which, in an inexplicable manner, drives both men to portray their destiny through their particular medium of art. Whatever the explanation may be, the theme of the supernatural is emphasized throughout the narrative.

The introduction of the supernatural at the end of a story, unless there have been sufficient indications throughout of the possibility of an exceptional event or situation, leaves the reader unprepared to accept it. What Louis Vax calls the "séduction de l'étrange" is essential in the mode of the fantastic.[35] The structure and style of the narrative must develop the code of the uncanny, the inexplicable and disturbing, before the reader can be affected by the description of the supernatural event. In Augusto Mario Delfino's story "El teléfono",[36] a realistic plot about a family tragedy in which the father dies ends with the unexpected information that the dead man has telephoned his daughter from a railway station long after the accident. The two simple words which Hebe pronounces after replacing the telephone receiver --"Era papá" (p.156)-- appear ridiculous rather than disquieting. Nothing in the story has indicated or foreshadowed the presence of the supernatural, which therefore has little effect. Hebe's affirmation that she has communicated with her father cannot be dismissed as the hallucination of a grief-stricken daughter, since her reactions to the extraordinary telephone call are clearly described by the third person narrator and observed by her sister Berta. She is the object, not the subject, of focalization, when she realizes who is speaking, turns pale, and when the conversation has terminated, smiles tenderly; her responses to the caller are also given, so that there is no doubt as to the reality of the event. Although this story falls within the category of the fantastic, it is an unconvincing and poorly constructed example of the mode.

Whereas it is relatively unproblematic to determine whether the code of the supernatural is sufficiently coherent in a fantastic narrative, it is much more difficult to decide what is to be considered as a supernatural event or situation. In our preceding discussion of borderline cases of magical realism, we pointed out that Cortázar's "Bestiario" cannot be unambiguously classified as magico-realist, since there is, strictly speaking, no supernatural event, only an extraordinary and implausible situation. However, since one can argue that this situation is unrealistic in comparison with the remainder of the text, it is justifiable to include this narrative in the mode of magical realism. A similar problem arises with respect to the fantastic. Do we discard a narrative from the mode because it is not unambiguously supernatural, only unbelievable?

A case in point is Cortázar's "La isla a mediodía",[37] in which an airline steward whose plane flies over a certain Greek island every day at noon finally resolves to travel to the island and lead an idyllic existence there. After he has been on the island for a while, he rescues a fatally wounded man, who has managed to swim ashore after his plane crashed. The rescuer Marini suddenly realizes that the dying man is himself, and the third person narrator ends the story by informing us that the Greeks "como siempre estaban solos en la isla, y el cadáver de ojos abiertos era lo único nuevo entre ellos y el mar" (p.127). The reader must then reinterpret the preceding pages of the story as the vivid day-dream of Marini, who continued his fantasizing even while he was struggling to reach shore after the crash. In this case, there is no supernatural phenomenon, such as astral projection, in which the body of Marini remains on the plane while his spirit wanders around the Greek island. The surprising ending is caused by the adept and realistic narration of Marini's day-dream, in which the steward is the sole reflector. This interpretation, however, is not completely satisfactory. A mortally wounded man would certainly think of other things while trying to swim ashore than his dream about an idyllic existence on the island. Nor would he be able to see the plane above him, as does Marini on the island, and watch it crash into the sea. The focalizer of the tragedy is not in the plane, but definitely on the island. The description of the dying man's bleeding throat is too detailed to be only in his imagination: the rescuer looks at his "cara llena de espuma donde la muerte estaba ya instalada, sangrando por una enorme herida en la garganta. De qué podía servir la respiración artificial si con cada convulsión la herida parecía abrirse un poco más y era como una boca repugnante que llamaba a Marini. . ." (p.126). As the rescued man dies, the narrative voice changes from the free indirect discourse which conveyed Marini's thoughts to the commentary of an invisible spectator. The supernatural code seems to provide a much more satisfactory explanation of the events: as soon as the injured man dies, his spirit which has been on the island can no longer observe what is going on around him, since it is destroyed by the death of the man. This code is created entirely by the type of focalization and the narrative voice, which eliminate the possibility of a realistic explanation. We cannot simply consider these narrative devices as a way of misleading the reader into accepting one narrative syntagm (Marini's stay on the island), and then discovering unexpectedly that a contradictory syntagm (Marini's accident) destroys the validity of the former. The sequential juxtaposition of two contradictory syntagms is not merely a gratuitous trick played on the reader, but a means of creating the fantastic. The consequences which are logically drawn from the detailed focalization by Marini of his own body must be unconditionally accepted by the reader if he does not want to misread the text. Thus an event which may appear as merely strange when interpreted as the excessively vivid daydreaming of Marini while the plane is crashing becomes unambiguously supernatural if one follows the indications given by the text.

A much more problematic example of what is to be considered as a supernatural or merely uncanny event is Eduardo Mallea's "La rosa de Cernobbio".[38] The florist's daughter Berta, who hopes that one day the promised and almost legendary rose will arrive from Italy to take her away from her monotonous existence, develops a paralysing fear of the rose's arrival after she has been happily married and no longer has any reason to desire a change in her life. As she becomes progressively more agitated, she persuades her husband to take her away. But while they are awaiting at the station, an inexplicable terror overcomes her: "se detuvo en mitad de la frase, fulminada como exangüe. Se llevó la pálida mano a la garganta. Los ojos se le salían de las órbitas" (p.186). When her husband returns with the bottle of gin to revive her, he meets a messenger carrying the beautiful rose of Cernobbio. The affirmation that "Ismael supo que ya era tarde" and the preceding description of his wife who "dejó caer la cabeza hacia atrás con los ojos fijos y abiertos, y la frente fría y transpirante" (p.186) suggest that she has died of terror. Her reactions could be interpreted as an obsession, in which case the story would fall entirely within the domain of the natural. The extent of her fear and her resulting death may be considered as an example of the uncanny, but this interpretation does not seem satisfactory. Her premonition of the rose's arrival turns out to be correct, and we can find no explanation of her apparent knowledge of the fact. After so many years of waiting, there is no reason why the rose should be expected to arrive at that precise moment. Although a realistic explanation of the incident may still be sought for in coincidence (Berta's obsessive fear reached its culmination at the same time as, and not because of, the rose's arrival), the code of the supernatural is definitely indicated by the text. It is not unambiguous as in "La isla a mediodía", but the fact that it provides a possible interpretation of the story justifies our classifying the narrative as an example of the fantastic.

Just as a coherent code of the supernatural is an essential characteristic of the fantastic, a realistic framework is indispensable. In "La Vénus d'Ille", Mérimée painstakingly provides a wealth of realistic detail in order to make the supernatural more credible. Learned discussions about the origins of the statue and the meaning of the Latin phrase engraved on it, detailed descriptions of the wedding preparations and general, objective observations by the erudite narrator about his surroundings provide a setting in which the supernatural seems profoundly disturbing. The more the reader can identify with the fictitious world, the more strongly he will react to the supernatural events in the text, which are not merely dismissed as symbolic or imaginary by the reader of the fantastic, because they are presented in a convincing manner. The less credible the events appear, the more the narrative leaves the domain of the fantastic to approach that of the marvellous.

Some authors go to great lengths to create the appropriate _effets de réel_,[39] or elements of the text which do not advance the plot or add to characterization, but simply provide an atmosphere of reality in order to authenticate the extraordinary events. Federico Peltzer's "A Bariloche"[40] is an excellent example of the proliferation of apparently gratuitous details provided by reliable authorities in order to lend credibility to the ghost. The story is a simple concatenation of nine fragments and lacks any form of commentary by a primary narrator. The reader must reach his own conclusions about the events described in the fragments, as the singular occurrence is not explained. The first fragment is a brief note by the station master that train no. 112 has departed according to schedule. The second paragraph contains a statement by the ticket inspector that everything was in order, except that the passenger of a certain compartment seemed extremely pale. In the third section, entitled "Expositión policial de Ceferino Troitiño", we learn that a passenger has left the dining compartment without paying and disappeared the next day. The following letter sent by another passenger, Margarita, to her friend, relates her lengthy conversation with a pale young man called Hernán Jáuregui. This information is confirmed by a passenger who offered employment to Hernán during the train journey. The sixth fragment is a brief telegramme to the station master of Bariloche stating that the passenger in the sleeping compartment 25/26 has locked himself in, and that the police should be called immediately. A short fragment from Hernán's diary is followed by a telegramme that a dead man has been found in the locked train compartment. In the ninth and final section of the story, three doctors inform the police of the results of the autopsy in writing: Hernán Jáuregui died of a heart attack between 4 and 5 o'clock on January 20, a few hours after the departure of the train. As we are given no other information, we must reconstruct the plot by ourselves. We soon realize that the information contained in the various fragments is contradictory. Hernán spoke to Margarita on the evening of the second day of the journey, according to her letter, and this meeting is confirmed by the man who offered him employment (fifth fragment). From the waiter's description of the passenger who left the dining car without paying, we can deduce that the latter is also Hernán. The logical implications of the information given are that Hernán indeed died soon after the departure of the train and that his ghost was seen wandering around for two days. Although the story is so constructed that the supernatural event is convincing according to the norms of the narrative, too much emphasis is laid on realistic detail and realiable narrators in proportion to the treatment given to the supernatural event itself. The code of the supernatural is reconstructed only after the reader has terminated the story, thus losing much of its effect.

A lack of realistic detail destroys the fantastic because there is then no antinomy between the natural and the supernatural. The norms of a certain code must be evident in the narrative before they can be broken by a contradictory code. Stories in which the emphasis is placed on the supernatural, and which have no realistic framework, belong to the domain of the absurd or the marvellous. Such is the case with most of Jorge Luis Borges' short stories and many selections included in various anthologies of the fantastic. If there is no realistic background against which the supernatural stands out, the distinction between magical realism and the fantastic also disappears. In a short narrative fragment by Anderson Imbert entitled "Twice-Told Tale",[41] the brevity of the work precludes the development of any convincing narrative code, so that the emergence of the supernatural at the end is neither antinomious with respect to the code of the natural, nor integrated within it. It is impossible to determine whether the story is fantastic or magico-realist. The plot is very simple: a man fleeing from terrorists finds a terrified boy hiding in a corner, who leads him into an attic where he thinks he will be safe from his persecutors. After the boy has closed the door which can only be opened from the outside, the boy disappears through the wall.

In conclusion, well developed codes of both the natural and the supernatural are essential to the modes of the fantastic and magical realism. If these codes are insufficiently developed in the narrative, we may leave the mode altogether, or have an unsuccessful literary text. Gérard Genette points out in his chapter on "Vraisemblance et motivation" in Figures II that one of the most important aspects of a literary work of art is the fonctionnalité of the individual elements of the text. By this he means that each component of the text must have an overall function in terms of the final effect of the work as a whole. Even if an action seems insufficiently motivated, it may be valuable for the development of a key scene later on. Although it is too simplistic to claim, as does Genette, that the "rendement d'une unité narrative, ou, si l'on préfère, sa valeur, sera donc la différence fournie par la soustraction: fonction moins motivation",[42] his insights are invaluable for the study of the fantastic and magical realism, as well as of fiction in general. Each narrative unit in the two modes discussed is useful primarily as a means of creating a final effect of conflicting and complementary antinomic codes. Since the reader must accept a more strictly defined role in these modes than he would in a realistic narrative, and is therefore prepared to read the text within the conventions imposed by them, elements which may seem gratuitous or repetitive in realistic fiction enhance the value of fantastic and magico-realist narratives, in which the emphasis is on the contradictory world views.

CHAPTER THREE

TWO TYPES OF ANTINOMY

The Fantastic

Although the fantastic and magical realism are characterized by the presence of coherently developed codes of the natural and the supernatural, and are therefore structurally similar, the manner in which these two codes interact in the text distinguishes the two modes from each other. Whereas the antinomies appear to be fused in magical realism, the contradictions between different conceptions of reality are placed in the foreground by the author of a fantastic text. In fact, the emphasis on conflicting world views which cannot be resolved according to the laws posited by the text itself is the most important distinguishing characteristic of the fantastic. In the first section of this chapter we will therefore identify and describe, through consideration of a number of works of the fantastic, the various ways in which the reader is confronted with the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural.

The most direct technique of stressing a logical contradiction is the assertion of the narrator that a certain event contravenes the laws of nature, but is not to be explained in terms of the supernatural, in which he does not believe. He is therefore led to give a detailed and moving account of something whose existence he denies. The contradiction in this instance is not only between an apparently impossible phenomenon and a realistic setting, but also between the obvious uneasiness experienced by the narrator in the face of this event and his categoric refusal to accept what does not conform to his conventional view of reality. If the narrator flatly discarded the evidence because he does not believe in the supernatural, then it would be logical to assume that he does not feel threatened by it. He would merely be confronted by a mystery which could eventually be explained rationally. However, this resembles a mystery thriller more than a story of the fantastic. Such an unambiguous narrator may be confronted by a phenomenon which he knows nobody can explain at the moment because our knowledge of the world is insufficient. Yet he is certain that the future discoveries of science will provide the solution. He might, for example, witness several instances of apparent telepathy, and even though he does not understand what is happening and does not believe there is such a thing, he will not be disturbed by the phenomenon. The supernatural does not exist for him, but he does not discard the possibility of something simply because nobody can explain it. He does not believe in it because he has no proof of its existence, but if it were discovered eventually that telepathy exists, he would then consider it as part of the laws of nature. A story based on such conditions would be neither fantastic nor supernatural. We are in the presence of the fantastic when the narrator's attitude towards the supernatural is ambiguous, which occurs when he is disturbed by something whose existence he denies.

Such is the case in Maupassant's short story "La Main".[1] The narrator is an examining magistrate who tries to solve a mysterious crime. One of his acquaintances was murdered by what appears to be the hand of a skeleton. Since all the doors and windows of the victim's room were locked when the crime took place, the only explanation seems to be supernatural. The magistrate, however, vehemently denies the existence of anything which does not conform to the laws of nature: "N'allez pas croire, au moins, que j'aie pu, même un instant, supposer en cette aventure quelque chose de surhumain. Je ne crois qu'aux causes normales" (p.178). His attitude towards the crime seems to be that of a calm, sensible man who believes that everything has a logical explanation, which his duty obliges him to find, even though it may sometimes seem impossible. The contrast between his manner and that of his audience is obvious. Whereas he presents the case in an apparently objective way, his female visitors are terrified. When he talks about another mysterious crime before he recounts the story about the amputated hand, the contrast in attitude is so exaggerated that it seems to be artificial:

> M. Bermutier, debout, le dos à la cheminée, parlait, assemblait les preuves, discutait les diverses opinions, mais ne concluait pas.
>
> Plusieurs femmes s'étaient levées pour s'approcher et demeuraient debout, l'oeil fixé sur la bouche rasée du magistrat d'où sortaient les paroles graves. Elles frissonnaient, vibraient, crispées par leur peur curieuse, par l'avide et insatiable besoin d'épouvante qui hante leur âme, les torture comme une faim. (p.177)

In spite of the magistrate's calm and restrained manner, however, he constantly betrays his emotions, thus implicitly contradicting his repeated assertion that the supernatural was not involved. More important than his confession that he believes that "quelque chose de fantastique" (p.178) was involved in the crime or that he was "ému" (p.179) by the circumstances of the murder is the implication of the story he is telling. On the one hand, he assures his audience that the crime must have a rational explanation, but on the other, he dwells on facts and descriptions which clearly belong to the code of the supernatural. He tells his visitors about the hideous, dessiccated hand attached with an iron chain to a wall of the victim's house, about the occupant's assertion that these measures are necessary to prevent the hand from escaping, and finally about the grisly details of the murder. The victim's neck is pierced by five small holes and appears to have been "étranglé par un squelette" (p.182). Although the magistrate does not voice his thoughts, it is obvious that he immediately suspected the hand and therefore briefly entertained the idea that the supernatural was involved. At least this is what his female audience and the reader are led to believe when the narrator tells them about his initial reaction to the fact that the hand is missing and the chain broken:

> Un frisson me passa dans le dos, et je jetais les yeux sur le mur, à la place où j'avais vu jadis l'horrible main d'écorché. Elle n'y était plus. La chaîne, brisée, pendait. (p.182)

Although the information he gives seems objective, the circumstances of the crime all point to the same conclusion. The presence of a finger from the dessiccated hand in the mouth of the victim, the constatation that his room had not been entered by force, and the servant's declaration that the victim had always kept a weapon with him and often beaten the hand riveted to the wall, suggest immediately that the author of the crime was the monstrous human trophy. This conclusion becomes more credible when the hand, which is lacking a finger, is eventually discovered on the dead man's tomb. The code of the supernatural is even further reinforced when the magistrate tells us that he had a nightmare about the murderous hand, which crawled along his walls like a scorpion.

Although the narrator is profoundly disturbed by the implications of the crime, he refuses to accept a supernatural explanation. If he did, the story would no longer be fantastic. It would be an example of supernatural horror. In this case, however, the reactions of the magistrate follow a pattern which we find in most traditional fantastic works. He is confronted by an event which he cannot explain rationally, and is disturbed by the possibility of a supernatural cause. Since he does not believe in the supernatural, however, he refuses any explanation not based on his concept of reality. Instead, he tries unsuccessfully to attribute the event to natural causes. The magistrate tells us that he believes "tout simplement que le légitime propriétaire de la main n'était pas mort, qu'il est venu la chercher avec celle qui lui restait" (p.183). But even he does not find this explanation satisfactory. He cannot conceive how the murderer could have committed the crime and dismisses the case as "inexplicable" (p.178). He even admits that "quelque chose de fantastique" (p.178) seemed involved in the crime.

The antinomy in this story is obvious. In an enlightened age in which everything is believed to have a rational explanation, and in which every mystery is finally resolved by meticulously searching for evidence, carefully analysing the situation, and then arriving at a conclusion, an event suddenly occurs which does not seem to fit into this pattern. All the indications suggest that a severed human limb has a will of its own and can commit a hideous crime. The antinomy between these two codes is reinforced by the conflicting attitudes of the magistrate and his audience. Whereas the former seems convinced that the crime ultimately has a rational explanation, his visitors do not believe this. Although the narrator appears condescending towards their superstition, it is obvious from a closer reading of the text that the antinomy between the two codes is reflected in the ambiguous reaction of the magistrate. The rationality he professes contradicts both his feelings of uneasiness and his train of thought which constantly, albeit unintentionally, reverts to the code of the supernatural.

In "La Main", the narrator creates a contradiction by describing an inexplicable event and at the same time discarding the supernatural, which is the only satisfactory explanation. The fact that he tries to explain the crime rationally renders his assertion of the exclusive validity of the natural redundant. The expression of this belief merely reinforces the antinomy. In Anderson Imbert's story "¿Qué voy a hacer yo con una guitarra?",[2] neither of the main characters informs us explicitly that he does not believe in the supernatural. The antinomy, however, is just as striking as in Maupassant's story. It is constantly emphasized by attempts on the part of the characters to find, at least initially, a rational explanation. To the protagonist Angel, the old man Fernández appears to have no extraordinary characteristics. The former attributes Fernández' complete disorientation to a number of causes, none of which is the real one. At first, he wonders whether the old man has been hit or knocked over, or whether the tumult of the New Year's festivities has totally confused him:

> El estruendo del año nuevo lo ha dejado atónito. Como herido por un rayo. Es natural. Un ramalazo de amnesia tal vez. Poco a poco le volverá la memoria. (p.8)

When Fernández proposes the incredible explanation that he has travelled 50 years into the future and, for this reason, is so surprised by the changes between the city he remembers from the beginning of the century and the same city in 1952, Angel simply concludes that he is insane:

> Hice esfuerzos para no reírme. . . . ¡Qué viejito lindo, éste! He pensado sucesivamente que estaba perdido, borracho, enfermo, amnésico. ¿Cómo no se me ocurrió que está loco? (pp.9-10)

But this explanation is satisfactory only to Angel. He may be convinced that the old man is mad and forget all about the incident after he has brought him to his home. Fernández, however, remembers nothing about the past 50 years and is horrified by the implications of this. After trying unsuccessfully to explain his predicament by the possibility that he is dreaming, he admits that the situation is simply inexplicable, just as Maupassant's narrator does: "No sé lo que me ha pasado. . . . No comprendo, no comprendo. . . . Vida ¿qué misterio estás tejiendo conmigo?" (pp. 5, 7). But, unlike the magistrate in "La Main", Fernández finally accepts a supernatural explanation of the mystery. He is convinced that he has travelled through time: "He dado un salto en el tiempo. Esto es todo" (p.9).

It would seem at this point that we are reading a science fiction story, in which events we now consider impossible are not out of place within the logical code of the text. If this were the case, there would be no antinomy between the natural and the supernatural, since the story presents a coherent world view based on an extrapolation of our present view of reality. Fernández, however, is not the narrator of the story, and his perception of the situation is secondary to that of the protagonist Angel. He is focalized by the young man who believes Fernández is insane. Since the reader must share the point of view of the primary focalizer and narrator, he also suspects the reliability of Fernández' conclusion. In this case, the supernatural has no place in the story at all. If we accept Angel's explanation, the old man is deranged and his perception of reality invalid. Even the antinomy, from the point of view of Fernández, between his knowledge about himself and the extraordinary and unfamiliar state in which he finds himself, loses its cogency. The story does not seem to belong to the fantastic at all, especially when Angel dismisses the case after having accompanied the old man home: "Lo ayudé a acostarse en su camita de hierro, como a un niño. Con la satisfacción del deber complido me retiré y ya no me preocupé más" (p.13).

The contradiction between the testimony of the old man and Angel's explanation is easily explained at this point in the story. But the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural is reestablished at the end by the same reliable narrator who had discarded the possibility of the supernatural throughout the first part of the story. Angel himself is confronted by an apparently inexplicable situation, when he is informed by a lawyer that the famous avant-garde author Fernández has bequeathed his prized guitar to him, in a will written many years before his encounter with the deranged old man on New Year's eve. Like the magistrate in "La Main", he immediately tries to find a rational explanation. The author Fernández probably made a mistake, or if the guitar was indeed meant to be for him, it was an exaggerated token of gratitude for having escorted him home. The fact that Fernández had drawn up his will before meeting Angel and the description of this meeting in the will itself corroborate the old man's belief that he had briefly visited the future Buenos Aires of 1952 fifty years before that date. Angel seems to accept this when he shows his displeasure at having inspired an avant-garde author when he himself is a Marxist. Even the lawyer apparently accepts the supernatural explanation of the strange will. But the fact that neither Angel nor the lawyer is surprised that such a leap in time has occurred does not eliminate the antinomy between the realistic framework of the text and the supernatural event. It is doubtful that the two men believe that this has really taken place, since they both treat the matter with obvious irony. This is all the more evident when we remember the ironic comments made by Angel after the old man told him about his travel in time on New Year's eve. They seem like a parody of the mode of the fantastic itself:

> Una mera irrupción de lo sobrenatural en el dominio de lo natural. Más natural no puede ser: lo natural, reforzado. Un simpático aventurero emprende en 1901 un viaje vertiginoso y después de luchar contra el ventarrón del tiempo llega a 1952 con la melena alborotada, las barbas en remolino, la corbata deshecha, la camisa polvorienta, un poquito envejecido y fatigado. . . . (p.10)

The first sentence echoes Caillois' definition of the fantastic: "une irruption insolite . . . dans le monde réel".[3]

This leads us to another problem. The antinomy is not destroyed at the end of the story by the acceptance of the apparently supernatural event within the logical framework of the text, which could make it an example of the marvellous. It is questioned, however, because of the ironic attitude of the protagonist Angel, and the equally ironic statements by the lawyer. Throughout the story, the existence of the fantastic has been threatened by the incorporation of the supernatural within the natural (Fernández' conclusion about his predicament), the explanation of all events according to rational laws (Angel's interpretation of the old man's behaviour), and finally the ironic attitude of the implied author with regard to the plot he has created. It is interesting to note here that Todorov considers one of the most common factors in the destruction of the fantastic to be the reader's questioning of the nature of the text itself. Apart from the obvious problem of the fantastic being considered as the marvellous or the strange, according to whether the extraordinary events are accepted as supernatural or explained rationally, this genre (as Todorov calls it) is dissolved by a non-literal reading of the text:

> Si l'on passe à un autre niveau, celui où le lecteur --toujours implicite-- s'interroge non sur la nature des événements, mais sur celle du texte même qui les évoque, on voit encore une fois le fantastique menacé dans son existence.[4]

This distancing may be caused by the interpretation of the text as allegory or poetry. In that case, the reader is not merely carried away by the plot, nor does he accept it only on the literal level. He takes a critical position with regard to the text and analyses it on several levels, such as the poetical, metaphorical, allegorical and philosophical. These levels even take precedence over the literal one, since the hierarchy of meaning is reversed. In the fantastic, however, the literal level is the most important, and as long as the other levels remain secondary, the text still belongs to this mode.

In "¿Qué voy a hacer yo con una guitarra?", the fantastic is indeed threatened by a self-conscious narrator, who recounts the events in such a way that the reader is prevented from interpreting them merely on the literal level. The obvious parody destroys the effect of the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural. Even the title of the story stresses the absurdity of the protagonist's reaction at the end. Instead of being amazed at the extraordinary events that have taken place, he simply wonders what he will do with a guitar. If indeed the element of parody is dominant in the story, then it becomes a parody of the fantastic, and not an example of the fantastic as such. The ironic attitude of Angel and the lawyer, however, does not necessarily indicate that the mode itself is parodied. The stereotyped reactions of modern man when confronted with an inexplicable event, and his dismissal of the case if he does not find a rational explanation, may be the object of parody. The title may point out the materialistic and utilitarian attitude of the protagonist, who does not care where something comes from, but to what use it can be put. Angel's apparent parody of the definition of the fantastic may tell us more about the protagonist's attitude, which is conditioned by literary stereotypes, than about the attitude of the implied author towards the mode.

The complexity of this story makes it obvious that the twentieth century fantastic cannot be as easily identified as that of the nineteenth. Does the irony in Anderson Imbert's story destroy the fantastic, or does it merely offer a secondary level of meaning? While Todorov's criteria for defining the fantastic may be useful in the analysis of one particular manifestation of the mode, they are clearly unsatisfactory for dealing with contemporary narratives. There is no reason why a text which satisfies the essential criteria we have established should be discarded from the mode of the fantastic because the reader is able to distance himself from it and interpret the narrative on various levels. As long as the self-consciousness of the narrator does not reach a point where the reader cannot accept the plot on a literal level, distancing such as irony, parody and allegory provides an additional dimension to the text without destroying the fantastic. In the story we have analysed, irony does not obscure the antinomy between the supernatural and the natural. The structure is based on this antinomy, which is developed throughout the narrative. Although it is resolved from the point of view of Fernández, and rejected by Angel who refuses to admit the possibility of the supernatural, it still exists for the implied reader. He is given conflicting information, confronted with an inexplicable situation (Fernández' will), and left with no explanation of the enigma at the end. The fact that the narrator himself comments on the mode to which he is contributing, and distances himself from the story he is telling, does not dissolve the antinomy. His self-consciousness merely illustrates the devices of the fantastic:

> Los escritores presumen de que con la fantasía se liberan de la coerción de las leyes físicas de la naturaleza y de la coerción de las leyes lógicas de la mente. ¡Si ellos lo dicen! Pero el placer de esa libertad es en el fondo el placer de desconcertar al prójimo con disparates. La literatura fantástica para mí es siempre literatura humorística. (pp. 11-12)

The most intersting phrase is "desconcertar al prójimo con disparates", because this is exactly what the fantastic does. It disconcerts the implied reader with its logical antinomy, even though he does not believe in the supernatural "disparates". He plays the game of fiction according to the laws established by the implied author.

There are several ways of introducing the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural in the text. The most common is the gradual insinuation of the unusual, the use of subtle foreboding, and the suggestion by the narrator that something extraordinary is going to happen. The code of the supernatural can also be introduced by a minor character, whose testimony is suspect, but whose reactions are remembered by the reader when an unusual event does occur. This anticipation of the unusual is most easily created by the reliance on obvious intertextuality. If the text is immediately situated by the reader within a given literary mode, then any minor detail which reinforces it is noticed and integrated within the particular reader's code. Textual indications which may otherwise be ignored thus contribute to the overall effect of the narrative. Jean Bellemin-Noël distinguishes between four main ways of announcing to the reader that the narrative is fantastic --two types of insertions of stories with analogous plots within the main narrative (_mise en abyme_ and _effet de miroir_), direct statements that it is fantastic (_effet de fantastique proprement dit_), and references to other practitioners of that mode (_effet de citation_).[5] A traditional supernatural motif in a realistic setting also informs the reader that he must adopt a certain attitude towards the text. Although there are no motifs that are fantastic in themselves, we can identify particular motifs that are more prevalent in the fantastic than in other modes of writing. The final characterization of the narrative as either fantastic or marvellous ultimately depends on the context of that motif, and its development within the text. But the nature of the motif does help orient the reader in a certain direction. The title of Maupassant's "La Main" informs the reader that the primary focus of the story is on a hand. When the narrator first describes the desiccated human relic, we immediately suspect that it has mysterious properties. The fact that it is riveted to the wall merely confirms these suspicions. The magistrate's explanation that the victim was killed by the man to whom the hand belonged is unsatisfactory, because the indications of the text point to the level of the supernatural throughout the story.

A motif that is constantly used in the fantastic is the animation of a statue. The implied reader, who is acquainted with Western folklore and literature, has a predictable reaction when he peruses a story in which a sculpture evinces mysterious properties. This intertextuality is of utmost importance in the study of reader response. If the setting of the story is realistic, then the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural is immediately perceived. But it must still be developed gradually, so that the reader can actively reconstruct the code of the fantastic, and anticipate the outcome of the plot. The subtle suggestion of the supernatural is more effective than direct authorial intervention. The reader is thus required to participate in a game where he is given an initial clue, such as a well-known motif, and subsequent indications which enable him to solve the mystery presented by the text. The fact that the solution of the mystery is never satisfactory in the fantastic is an essential characteristic of the mode. The antinomy can never be resolved, only reconstructed by the reader and analysed.

In Carlos Fuentes' story "Chac Mool",[6] intertextuality and the knowledge of the meaning of the title lead the implied reader to identify the code of the supernatural within the first few paragraphs of the text. Since the title informs the reader that the narrative is about the Mayan rain god, if he is familiar with Meso-American religion, he will probably associate the death of the protagonist with human sacrifices to the rain god Chac Mool, a connection reinforced by the drowning of the protagonist Filiberto. This information is provided in the first sentence of the story: "Hace poco tiempo, Filiberto murió ahogado en Acapulco" (p.7). The setting of the story, on the other hand, is realistic and almost banal. The narrator gives an unemotional account of the circumstances of his colleague's death. Like many people of his social class, Filiberto spent his annual holiday at the popular seaside resort. His death hardly seems surprising to his former co-worker. Although Filiberto was a good swimmer in his youth, his middle age and poor physical condition inevitably led to his drowning when he attempted to swim a long distance at midnight. The slightly ironic description of the corpse waiting in its coffin for the morning train and being covered with a pile of coconuts so that the other passengers would not be upset, as well as the sarcastic remark that Filiberto could not resist the "bureaucratic temptation" of going to Acapulco to eat sauerkraut in the German boarding house, reinforce the creation of a credible background. This is essential in the fantastic, since the code of the real must be firmly established if the supernatural is to be seen as antinomious. The slightest flaw in logic stands out against a world which is ruled by it. Why, for example, did Filiberto buy only a one-way ticket, when his behaviour is otherwise so predictable and conventional? Another note of mystery is introduced when his friend decides to read the dead man's diary in the hope of finding out why Filiberto behaved so strangely at the office before his dismissal. The first few paragraphs introduce the characteristic antinomy of the fantastic. An apparently inexplicable event occurs in a conventional world, and the association with the supernatural is foreshadowed by the title and its connection with the protagonist's death by drowning.

The antinomy is developed in Filiberto's diary by the description of events which can be integrated within the code of the supernatural, and the account of the protagonist's attempts at explaining them rationally. The coherent pattern of the strange phenomena stand in contrast to this rationalization, and point to a supernatural explanation. As soon as Filiberto places the stone figure of Chac Mool in his basement, his entire house becomes inundated from a tap he has left running. The logical explanation is that he was careless ("incauto", p.14), but an association between the rain god and the flooding is immediately established. When Filiberto is woken up at night by a loud moaning noise, he briefly entertains the thought that there may be burglars and then dismisses the incident as "Pura imaginación" (p.15). As the strange sounds continue, he reacts like so many protagonist-victims of the fantastic: "No sé a qué atribuirlo, pero estoy nervioso" (p.15). He simply cannot find an explanation and is disturbed by this. When the house is again inundated and the nocturnal noises stop, he dismisses this as a coincidence. The statue subsequently undergoes several changes. It becomes covered with green moss, which Filiberto attributes to its humid surroundings. When the figure becomes soft, he concludes that the man who had sold it to him had passed off a cheap clay idol for an authentic stone carving. Soon he can no longer find rational explanations for the strange properties of the figure. Its surface feels like flesh and its arms are covered with fine hair. His reactions are predictable: the whole affair seems "increíble" (p.17), and he wonders whether he has been imagining things: "Tendré que ver a un médico, saber si es imaginación, o delirio, o qué, y deshacerme de ese maldito Chac Mool" (p.18). This is the only conclusion that can be reached by a man who believes only in the laws of logic. If a phenomenon is logically impossible, then the perceiver must be unreliable.

It is at this point that the identity of Filiberto changes. He appears as "otra persona" (p.18) to his friend, who comments on the diary he is reading. The antinomy between the natural and the supernatural has reached a turning point. The code of the supernatural is too convincing to be destroyed by a rational explanation. The protagonist can either accept it, in which case the story becomes an example of the marvellous, and in this case magical realism, since the conventional view of reality in modern society coexists on the fictional plane with the world view of the primitive Mexican as presented by the narrator, or he can dismiss the incident as inexplicable. In this story, he accepts the evidence presented to him and describes the statue's gradual transformation into an animate being. He now has a completely different perception of reality:

> Realidad: cierto día la quebraron en mil pedazos,
> la cabeza fue a dar allá, la cola aquí, y nosotros
> no conocemos más que uno de los trozos desprendidos

> de su gran cuerpo. Océano libre y ficticio, sólo
> real cuando se le aprisiona en un caracol. (p.19)

Meso-American religion becomes part of modern reality, as Chac Mool becomes an incarnation of the mythological being who demands human sacrifices in exchange for rain. The reference to the smell of incense and blood, and to the blood-stained belly of the rain god, which are the characteristics of sacrifice, is followed by the indication that another deluge has taken place. Chac Mool, with his "barriga encarnada" and his "cabeza anormalmente voluminosa" (p.23), creates his humid environment in order to live comfortably.

Filiberto, however, is not the primary narrator of the story. Although most of it is focalized by him, the narrative is introduced by another character who influences the reader's response to the protagonist's diary. Not only does the latter's testimony seem preposterous; the primary narrator clearly states that his friend is deranged. This renders Filiberto's account even more suspect. He was discharged from his job because of his unusual behaviour and inability to perform his duties satisfactorily. There is no doubt in his friend's mind that he is insane when he asks questions such as whether it is possible to smell water or whether he could work on a project to produce rain in a desert. He does not know what caused Filiberto's insanity, and tries to find a rational explanation. Not for a moment does he take his friend's diary seriously:

> No supe qué explicación darme; pensé que las
> lluvias exceptionalmente fuertes, de ese verano,
> lo habían enervado. O que alguna depresión
> moral debía producir la vida en aquel caserón
> antiguo, con la mitad de los cuartos bajo llave
> y empolvados, sin criados ni vida de familia. (p.21)

When the story resumes with the diary, in which Filiberto describes the activities of Chac Mool, the reader cannot give much credence to his extraordinary account. It seems even more ridiculous when the reincarnated god takes an interest in his host's silk dressing gowns, soap and lotions. His statement that "si el Chac se humaniza, posiblemente todos sus siglos de vida acumulen en un instante y caiga fulminado" (p.26) appears more humorous than symbolical at this point.

The supernatural in Filiberto's account is not presented as antinomious by the primary narrator because the latter denies its existence. Just as in "¿Qué voy a hacer yo con una guitarra?", the story has reached a point at which the rational first person narrator dismisses all evidence indicating the supernatural as the ramblings of a madman: "De ahí a México pretendí dar coherencia al escrito, relacionarlo con exceso de trabajo, con algún motivo sicológico" (p.27). The antinomy is then reestablished at the end of the story, when the realiable narrator is confronted with an inexplicable phenomenon that seems to corroborate the testimony of the secondary narrator. Filiberto's friend finds an Indian in the deceased's house who corresponds to the description of Chac Mool in the diary. The human intruder is described as "amarillo, en bata de casa, con bufanda. Su aspecto no podía ser más repulsivo; despedía un olor a loción barata" (p.28). Filiberto had noted that the humanized God was "ocre" (p.20), had taken a liking to his dressing gowns and lotions, and appeared extremely aged (p.27). His friend also notices the Indian's wrinkles. If Filiberto's testimony coincides to a certain extent with the observations of a sane and objective narrator, then it regains some validity. This is strengthened by the fact that the presence of the Indian in Filiberto's house is hard to explain rationally, since the narrator has told us that his friend had no servants (p.21).

One can find several rational explanations of the ending. The Indian, for example, could have taken over the house after the departure of Filiberto. But then, how would he know all about the owner's death before it was announced to him? However, a rational explanation is not suggested by the text itself, and we would be misreading the story if we tried to impose one. All the indications of the text point to a code of the supernatural, and the repeated dismissal of this by the narrator creates the antinomy which is firmly established at the end. This does not prevent the reader from interpreting the story on another level. Just as Anderson Imbert's story can be an example of the fantastic as well as a parody of it or a commentary on our society, Fuentes' narrative may be understood on the symbolical level as well as the literal, without destroying the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural, and therefore invalidating the code of the fantastic.

The complexity of "Chac Mool" makes it more than just an example of the fantastic, but does not exclude it from that category. A modern Spanish American narrative which lacks the symbolical dimension of Fuentes' story, and which can be analysed almost exclusively in terms of the devices of the fantastic, is Bonifacio Lastra's "Pigmalión".[7] In this story, the intertextuality of the title and the name of the statue (Galatea) introduce the code of the supernatural, which is developed throughout the text. The antinomy between the realistic framework and the constant suggestion of the mysterious constitute almost the entire plot. The devices of supernatural foreboding and rationalization by the narrator of strange phenomena are used to the point of exaggeration. Here we have the techniques of the fantastic mises à nu. The outcome of the story can be predicted right from the beginning. To facilitate interpretation of the plot even further, there is only one narrator, whose conventional view of reality is threatened by the occurrence of an apparently supernatural event. No secondary narrator, like Filiberto in Fuentes' story, disorients us with his acceptance of the supernatural. Nor does an event at the end corroborate the testimony of the unreliable narrator while at the same time suggesting a rational, even if unsatisfactory, explanation of the extraordinary circumstances of the victim's death. The simplicity of the story prevents it from becoming great literature, but it enables us to isolate the essential characteristics of the fantastic.

The antinomy between the rationally explicable and the mysterious is established on the first page of the narrative. The narrator informs us that Ranieri's sculptures are acclaimed for their "extraña vivencia" (p.123). He admits that he cannot explain the mysterious quality of the figures' faces: "Esculpía en los rostros una expresión de misterio cuyo origen nunca alcancé a precisar" (p.123). Although he tells us that critics ascribe this quality to the manner in which Ranieri models their eyes, he does not necessarily share their opinion. The explanation is not his, but that of the critics ("Según algunos críticos . . .", p.123). The text, however, still provides a rational explanation, even if the narrator does not apparently accept it. Subsequent indications in the text will enable the reader to explain strange events rationally. The sculptor is not a very balanced individual, and his extraordinary behaviour can be ascribed to his emotional state. When the narrator visits him in his studio, he notes that Ranieri is "en una de sus agudas crisis de neurastenia" (p.124). The sculptor himself admits that he has "antecedentes hereditarios de locura" (p.125). This information attenuates the effect of his strange proclamation that he is interested in an "extraño arte de vida y muerte" (p.125). However, the fact that the narrator informs us that he does not understand the phrase at the moment, but that he will later on, draws our attention to the sculptor's assertion. The latter's words are integrated in the code of the supernatural. From this point on, Ranieri's strange behaviour is not simply explained by his emotional imbalance, since we are told by the narrator that the sculptor's statement has greater significance than is first apparent. Anything unusual that occurs in the text is immediately noticed by the reader, who gradually re-creates the code that the author has developed.

The antinomious code of the rational is developed simultaneously. The narrator is disturbed by his friend's behaviour because he is concerned about his health. When Ranieri voices his fears about becoming insane, the narrator immediately rationalizes his mood: "Me tranquilicé, atribuyendo todo a un estado de postración y desaliento, común en los artistas ante el fracaso en la ejecución de alguna de sus obras" (p.125). Every occurrence in the story is presented in such a manner that it can be explained rationally, even though it may appear strange. The plot seems to be an almost deliberate illustration of what Todorov considers to be the essential characteristic of the fantastic --the hesitation between a natural and a supernatural explanation of a phenomenon by the protagonist and hence the reader, who identifies with him.[8] No event is unambiguously supernatural, yet the constant allusion to the strange and the absence of a satisfactory rational explanation lead the reader to consider a supernatural solution. When Ranieri asks his host how far the cemetery is from the house, his interest can have a perfectly logical explanation. The context, however, suggests that this behaviour is somehow connected with the mystery which lies at the centre of the plot. Ranieri's previous allusion to an art of life and death and the detailed, even if brief, description of the cemetery make it obvious that the sculptor's interest in its location is not gratuitous. In the fantastic, maybe more than in any other literary mode, everything that is referred to has an overall significance in the development of the plot. This is what B. Tomaševskij called "compositional motivation" in a book published in 1925.[9] Although the Russian Formalist's theories apply to short narratives in general, they are particularly appropriate for the study of the fantastic. He describes compositional motivation as follows:

> Son principe consiste dans l'économie et l'utilité des motifs. . . . Pas un seul accessoire ne doit rester inutilisé par la fable. Tchékhov a pensé à la motivation compositionnelle en disant que si au début de la nouvelle on dit qu'il y a un clou dans le mur, à la fin c'est à ce clou que le héros doit se pendre. (p.282)

All the motifs, which are the smallest independent thematic units of a text, must form a coherent whole. Therefore they must be in some way justified, either by compositional, realistic, or aesthetic motivation. It is obvious that the author of "Pigmalión" is not too interested in aesthetic or realistic motivation. The most important facet of the story is the development of the plot, and thus compositional motivation justifies the introduction of most motifs. The implied reader's code requires us to remember details which we can later integrate within the story as a whole. The various motifs (in the sense that Tomaševskij defines them, and not in the conventional understanding of the term) are not embellishments, but integral parts of the plot. They are necessary for the dénouement. If Ranieri, for example, were not residing at close proximity to the cemetery, his nocturnal excursions and supernatural experiment would be impossible.

Although the motifs form a coherent code of the supernatural, they can also have rational explanations, and this maintains the antinomy. The importance of their ambiguous justification (compositional and realistic) in the fantastic is stressed by Vladimir Soloviov:

> [Les] événements [du fantastique] ne doivent jamais contraindre à croire au sens mystique des événements de la vie, mais doivent plutôt le suggérer, y faire allusion. Dans le véritable fantastique, on garde toujours la possibilité extérieure et formelle d'une explication simple des phénomènes, mais en même temps cette explication est complètement privée de probabilité interne. Tous les détails particuliers doivent avoir un caractère quotidien, mais considérés dans leur ensemble ils doivent indiquer une causalité autre.[10]

Ranieri's extraordinary behaviour, for example, is explained by his host in the following manner: "Pensé que estaba seriamente enfermo de los nervios. . ." (p.132). But this explanation would be contrary to the coherence of the text. The narrator's insistence on the mysterious indicates a different level of causality. The state of his friend disturbs him greatly. When he hears Ranieri walking around his room at night, he is obviously worried by more than the sculptor's insomnia: "Me acosté nuevamente, pero no pude conciliar el sueño pensando en el estado de mi amigo y rumiando algunas de sus frases extrañas" (p.127). After Ranieri's nocturnal walk, his host experiences the same malaise: "Sospeché que había ido al cementerio y la preocupación por su rara conducta me mantuvo desvelado hasta las primeras horas de la mañana" (p.129). The sculptor's desire to have his studio rearranged so that no light enters it, and nobody can penetrate it without destroying the slats nailed over the doors and windows, can also be explained rationally. But although it is understandable that he requires absolute peace in order to work, his excessive precautions suggest that there is a more sinister reason behind his request. When Ranieri's host is invited to view the sculpture he has been working on, he feels "una insoportable angustia y una terrible curiosidad. . ." (p.130). The statue of Galatea is in fact extraordinary, and the narrator admits that he is incapable of understanding what imparts such a strange expression of life to the figure's face: "Entre el hueco de los ojos me pareció ver unas pupilas con vida, y la sugestión o la realidad, no sé hasta hoy lo que fue verdaderamente, me mostró una mirada tan extraña que jamás podría describir" (p.131). The sculptor's reaction of jealousy when his host caresses the statue confirms that the creator has fallen in love with his work of art, just like Pygmalion, the Cyprian sculptor. The intertextuality is obvious. Ranieri's Galatea, like the statue in Greek mythology, bears an extraordinary resemblance to a human being. In Ovid's version of the legend, Galatea's face "was life itself", and Pygmalion asks himself whether she is indeed living:

> Was she alive or not? He could not tell.
> He kissed her; did her lips respond to his?

> He spoke to her, then slipped both hands around her
> And felt a living whiteness move; then, frightened,
> He hoped he had not stained that perfect beauty.[11]

It is clear that any rational explanation of the qualities of Ranieri's statue is secondary to the implications of the intertextual motif. The implied reader, who knows that the legendary Galatea was transformed into a real woman by Venus, is led by the textual indications to foresee the outcome of the plot. Although the coherence of the narrative can only be maintained by constant allusion to the supernatural, the text provides alternative rational explanations which have the function of leaving the reader in suspense. Authorial intervention would destroy this "game". Therefore the reader is told only as much as the protagonist knows. When the narrator describes the reaction of the terrified dogs on the night of the climactic event, he offers a solution to their behaviour. The discrepancy between the dogs' fear, however, and the rational explanation of it, is obvious. They would not cringe in terror simply because Ranieri has committed suicide in his apartment. The contradiction between event and explanation is carried almost to absurdity:

> A la madrugada, alrededor de las tres, me despertaron los animales. Pero esta vez no ladraban ni toreaban. Sólo escuché sus aullidos insistentes y prolongados.
>
> Salí al jardin y los llamé. Se acercaron arrastrándose, con el rabo metido entre las patas. Al acariciarlos noté que temblaban y tenían el pelo rizado. (p.131)

Their extreme terror when they approach the sculptor's apartment suggests that they can sense an extraordinary and alien presence, not just the death of the guest.

The butler's revelation that Ranieri took frequent sketches of the statue of the deceased twin daughter of Larraeta in the cemetery, provides a rational explanation of the life-like qualities of the sculptor's work. The host almost decides to dismiss the mystery as solved. This information does indeed explain the guest's nocturnal visits to the cemetery, and the code of the supernatural is temporarily suspended:

> Esa revelación empezó a desvanecer en parte el misterio en que había envuelto a Ranieri desde nuestra llegada, y hasta se me borró un poco la enorme impresión que me había producido su obra, al enterarme de que trabaja en base a los dibujos tomados de una foto-escultura. (pp. 134-135)

When the host and his butler observe a woman identical to the statue, dancing in Ranieri's atelier, the butler recognizes her as the twin of Larraeta's dead daughter. The host's only reaction is one of annoyance at the sculptor's incorrect behaviour in smuggling a young girl into his apartment. In spite of the fact that the narrator cannot explain how the girl managed to enter the house, or how Ranieri made her acquaintance, a rational explanation is entirely feasible at this point. The story could end with the revelation that Ranieri already knew one of the twins, went into a state of shock and depression after the death of the one he loved, accepted his friend's invitation so that he could work on a statue of the girl buried in the local cemetery, and finally started a liaison with her twin sister. It is obvious from the text that he knew of the presence of the sculpture in the cemetery, because of his interest in its location and his intention of working on a sculpture himself. Even the girl's suicide is understandable. When the host finds out about her throwing herself under a train, he immediately concludes that she repented of her conduct:

> Rápidamente reproduje la escena de la muchacha arrepentida de su conducta y arrojándose bajo el tren de regreso de mi estancia a la casa de su padre. (p.137)

However, this explanation, while providing a very banal ending to a second-rate story, entirely violates the norms of the narrative. A rational ending is illogical after the development of a coherent code of the supernatural. The sense of mystery surrounding Ranieri, the host's uneasiness, and the insistence on the fact that the girl's presence in the house is inexplicable, would be gratuitous. The plot would then be an example of "fausse motivation":

> Ce procédé figure très souvent dans les romans policiers où un certain nombre de détails est donné afin d'amener le lecteur . . . sur une mauvaise piste. L'auteur nous laisse supposer un faux dénouement.[12]

This device may be effective in a detective novel, but it would be entirely misplaced here. The "mauvaise piste" in this case is not simply an alternative rational explanation of a mystery, but a different ontological level. The purpose of introducing the code of the supernatural is not to distract the reader from the correct solution, but to provide a logical contradiction. The supernatural occurs in a world where it is impossible. In the fantastic, the antinomy between different intellectual codes is the most important characteristic. In detective novels, on the other hand, the reader's role is to resolve any contradiction and arrive at a logical conclusion. If the reader is misled in the fantastic, it is not by the supernatural, but by the possibility of a rational explanation. The title and structure of "Pigmalión", for example, indicate that the only logical solution to the enigma is supernatural. The well-known intertextual reference to the animated Greek statue would be out of place if the story had a rational ending. It is the ambiguity of the fantastic that the only logical solution with respect to the norms of the narrative is the irrational.

"Pigmalión" follows the traditional code of the fantastic by introducing an event which violates all laws of reason. The rational explanation is invalidated by the information that Larraeta's daughter committed suicide at least three hours before the protagonist-narrator and his butler saw her in Ranieri's studio. Their initial reaction is that of any victim in the fantastic. The narrator wonders whether he is mad, and his butler is merely horrified in the face of the inexplicable and apparently supernatural. Like most narrators in the fantastic, Ranieri's friend tries to rationalize the occurrence. He suspects that his butler may have confused Larraeta's daughter with another woman. Although he cannot understand the mystery, he refuses to accept the supernatural and desperately tries to find a rational solution:

> Me acometió una terrible ansiedad por ver a mi amigo, por interrogarlo hasta desentrañar este misterio. El terror de encontrarme ante lo inexplicable, ante el espanto de lo sobrenatural, me incitó, como si me aferrara de algo para salvarme de la locura, a desear con desesperación que Ranieri aclarara lo ocurrido. (p.139)

When they find that the sculptor has committed suicide as well, they know that the mystery will remain unsolved. Since accepting the supernatural would lead to insanity, as in the case of Filiberto in "Chac Mool", the narrator can only hope that he and his butler were dreaming: "Tal vez, Dios lo quiera, nos convenzamos ambos con el tiempo, de que esto ha sido una atroz pesadilla" (p.140). When they are finally convinced of the reality of the occurrence, they give up the case as inexplicable.

In the four stories we have analysed, the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural is created not only by the structure and style of the narrative, but by the direct reference to it by the narrator. The contradiction within the text is intellectualized by the narrator or protagonist himself. It is as if the author were guiding the reader, so that the latter cannot miss the implications of the text. So obvious is this explanation of what the reader could understand himself if he were to read the story carefully, that it seems to detract from the effect of the fantastic. The abundance of authorial clues destroys the challenge of actively reconstructing the codes present in the text. It seems an insult to the reader's intelligence. The magistrate of "La Main" draws exaggerated attention to the mysterious characteristics of the amputated hand, while plainly contradicting the presentation of the facts by claiming that he does not believe in the supernatural. A more subtle description of the circumstances of the crime would seem to enhance the literary value of the story. In "Pigmalión", the outcome of the plot is divulged by the title and the initial description of the sculptor and his work. What then is the purpose of creating an atmosphere of mystery and foreboding throughout the story? In "¿Qué voy a hacer yo con una guitarra?", the narrator informs us that he does not believe in the intrusion of the supernatural in the real world. Yet the reader knows from the familiar motif of travel in time and the structure of the story what the outcome will be. In "Chac Mool", Filiberto's diary is obviously not the product of a diseased imagination, but based on a real occurrence within the fictitious world. In each of these stories, the narrator raises the predictable questions. Has the event occurred or not? Is the informer reliable? Were his senses deceived?

But although the devices of the fantastic are laid bare, the reader is not disturbed by them. Just as the narrator is conscious of his artifice, the reader is aware of the conventions of the fantastic. Yet he ignores them while reading the narrative according to their guidelines. It seems that in this mode, maybe more than in any other, the reader consents to play a game. He observes its rules, but is not hampered by them. He is a passive reader, in that he interprets the story exactly as indicated by the obvious conventions of the mode. But he is also an active participant in the game of fiction, because he must distance himself from his own beliefs and accept the code of the fantastic. He allows himself to be carried away by something in which he does not believe.

Since a stereotyped literary mode soon becomes second-rate literature, modern authors have attempted to provide an additional dimension. Fuentes, while observing the rules of the fantastic, has created a richly symbolical story. Anderson Imbert has commented on the mode in which he was writing while following its prescriptions. Some authors, however, have chosen to remain entirely within the fantastic, and to innovate with respect to the traditional devices themselves. No allegorical, symbolical, psychological or social dimension has been added to the fantastic in this case. These writers have further developed the distinguishing characteristics of the fantastic.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in the creation of antinomy.

The modern reader, whose cultural background includes traditional fantastic plots and supernatural motifs, can dispense with narratorial information which is redundant. A few textual indications permit him to realize that he is reading a fantastic narrative, and that he must observe the conventions of a particular reader's code. He need not be told that vampires are inexistent to perceive the antinomy between the real and supernatural. Nor need he be given such obvious clues as a title which explains the whole story before he has even started reading it. An example of a fantastic narrative in which the reader has little authorial help in re-creating the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural is "La isla a mediodía", which we have discussed in the previous chapter. The author, Cortázar, has repeatedly stressed the importance of reader participation, and criticized literature that encourages the reader to be passive. Rayuela (1963) is a somewhat exaggerated example of a novel in which the text cannot be read from the first page to the last, and where the reader is not simply carried along by the plot. In this experimental work, one is forced by the jumbling of chapters to break one's train of thought and search for the next chapter, which may have little obvious connection with the plot. The reader is disconcerted by the unorthodox structure, and is thus able to maintain an aesthetic distance towards what he is reading. A more successful example of this kind of forced reader participation is "La isla a mediodía". The title does not refer to an obvious intertextual motif, and the style is that of any realistic short story. The author creates no atmosphere of mystery, does not introduce any strange character, and gives no indication whatsoever that the outcome of the story may be supernatural. The reader must be very attentive to the story if he is to perceive the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural. In fact, the antinomy only becomes apparent when we realize that there is a contradiction between two otherwise logical narrative sequences. The description of Marini's sojourn on the island appears to be the relation of a vivid day-dream. What actually happens to the protagonist is that his plane crashes near the island while he is engrossed by his idyllic fantasy. As we have demonstrated in our previous chapter, the two sequences are contradictory. Only a detailed study of the use of focalization and narrative voice can enable the reader to perceive this. Once the presence of this contradiction is established, the reader must find a way of resolving it, since the narrator gives us no explicit information about the nature of the mystery. He proposes neither a rational, nor a supernatural explanation, as in "La Main" of "Pigmalión", for example. Since it is impossible to find a rational explanation on the basis of the text, the reader must deduce a supernatural one. As he is sufficiently aware of the theme of the double in literature, it is not difficult to arrive at the conclusion that Marini's other self was on the island, while his real self remained on the plane. This is not merely an extrapolation of the text, since there are sufficient indications that this explanation is the only one which conforms to the internal coherence of the story. At the same time it is antinomious with respect to the realistic framework of the narrative. Just as there is an implied author and an implied reader, there is an implied antinomy. The theory underlying these three concepts is the same. An author who does not obviously intervene to explain the narrative is more effective than one who explicitly tells the reader how to interpret it. This does not apply to literature in general, as authorial interventions often enhance the quality of the work. But they do detract from the illusion of reality. Ian Watt correctly points this out in his discussion of Fielding's novels: "Few readers would like to be without the prefatory chapters, or Fielding's diverting asides, but they undoubtedly derogate from the reality of the narrative", and "such authorial intrusion, of course, tends to diminish the authenticity of the narrative."[13]

In an attempt to dispense with any direct references to the mode of the fantastic, Cortázar has written a story where the antinomy lies entirely in the discrepancy between two logical codes. Whereas a supernatural motif can explain this contradiction in "La isla a mediodía", no such solution is given in his story "La noche boca arriba".[14] The reader is simply presented with two antinomious narratological sequences. The author uses none of the traditional devices of the fantastic, such as foreboding, mystery, references to the existence or inexistence of the supernatural, or an intertextual motif which immediately orients the reader. A realistic description of a young man who has a motorcycle accident and is taken to hospital alternates with an equally realistic description of a fugitive Indian who is captured and sacrificed by the Aztecs. While no explanatory sentences connect the two sequences, the Indian protagonist and focalizer of the second sequence mentions several times that he is dreaming, and that he is delirious with fever. This threatens the antinomy, since the latter sequence is relegated to a secondary level of fictional reality. Antinomy can only exist if the two contradictory codes are on the same textual level. An absurd dream does not conflict with the realistic framework of a story. Although both sequences in Cortázar's story are presented by the same focalizer, and each one is logical in itself, the account of the Aztec sacrifice is perceived as a méta-récit.[15] Contrary to the textual indications throughout the story, however, the plot does not end with the primary narrative sequence. The protagonist realizes that he is not in the hospital of a modern metropolis dreaming about being pursued by the Aztecs. He is actually a pre-Columbian Indian who is dreaming about the future --a motorcycle accident and internment in a hospital. This conclusion lends itself to various interpretations. If we accept the veracity of the first sequence, the protagonist has had delirious nightmares about his cultural past, and the final realization that this past is real instead of the present is merely the climax of the injured man's delirium. His testimony is unreliable, and the fantastic is eliminated. This explanation, however, cannot be accepted. The focalizer of the two narrative sequences has the same identity throughout the story, but his perspective has changed completely, since he focalizes the same objects in different ways. In the first sequence, he consistently perceives the world like any contemporary man. Large cities, electric lights and motorcycles are familiar to him. In the second sequence, however, this perspective changes. Even though it is easy to explain the vividness of the dream by assuming that the protagonist was well informed about his cultural heritage, the point of view of the sacrificial victim at the end of the story directly contradicts the motorcyclist's perspective. The large city and the motorcycle suddenly appear strange and absurd:

> . . . había andado por extrañas avenidas de una

> ciudad asombrosa, con luces verdes y rojas que
> ardían sin llama ni humo, con un enorme insecto
> de metal que zumbaba bajo sus piernas. (p.166)

With this device of Verfremdung, where the narrator describes a familiar scene as if it were something new and unknown, the author has completely changed the attributes of the focalizer. The latter is no longer our contemporary, but a pre-Columbian Indian. This invalidates the supernatural explanation that the Indian was dreaming about an event several hundred years in the future, because his perspective throughout the dream would be coherent. If he understands the future in his dream, then he would not suddenly revert to a primitive mentality at the end of the same dream sequence.

In spite of the innovative use of the fantastic in this story, the distinguishing characteristic of the mode is the same as for the other examples we have analysed. The antinomy between the natural and the supernatural is created by contradictory world views. In traditional stories of the fantastic, the contradiction is between the belief in the supernatural, and the belief that everything has a logical explanation. In "La noche boca arriba", the antinomy is created by the juxtaposition of a primitive and a modern mentality, which are contradictory because they occur in the same character. Just as the reader cannot accept a fictitious world which is governed by reason but threatened by the irrational, he cannot accept a character who professes conflicting world views and assumes contradictory personalities.

Magical Realism

Whereas the simultaneous presence of the natural and the supernatural in the fantastic creates a torn and disturbing fictitious world, it is the essential characteristic of a harmonious and coherent world in magical realism. Since exclusive validity is not claimed for the conventional norms of logic and reason, supernatural phenomena do not threaten the harmony of the established world order. The rational and the irrational are not presented as antinomious by the narrator of a magico-realist work. They are both part of fictive reality. The supernatural appears as normal as the daily events of ordinary life.

The implied reader, who can distinguish between the natural and the supernatural on the basis of his education and cultural background, is asked to suspend this attitude in order to adopt the point of view of a person with a completely different perception of reality. He must allow himself to be carried away entirely, without questioning, by the alien world view presented by the text. It is necessary for him to accept the reality of the supernatural. In both the fantastic and magical realism, the reader plays the game of a naïve witness. In the former, he unquestioningly accepts the laws of logic, yet is carried away by the narration of events which contradict these laws. In magical realism, he simply enjoys the narrative without distancing himself from the events and pondering the validity of the fictitious world. In both modes, he can only play the game with the guidance of the narrator. In the fantastic, traditional motifs, the suggestion of mystery and implicit or explicit references to the supernatural lead the reader to react to the plot in a certain way. The narrator of a magico-realist story orients the reader in the opposite direction. Instead of being manifestly disturbed by the supernatural, he considers it as normal. This temporary resolution of antinomy is achieved by presenting logically contradictory events in such a way that the contradiction is not perceived. If the narrator adopts the point of view of a distant observer who explains why the characters in a narrative believe in the supernatural, or how they perceive certain supernatural events, then the validity of such events is implicitly questioned. The description of superstition, for example, becomes an exercise in exoticism. The narrator must actually adopt the perspective of a character who believes in a world ruled by laws different from our own. He must eliminate all textual signs of subjectivity which would invalidate the content of his account. If he claims that a character believes a certain thing, then he is implicitly denying his own belief in it, and thereby distancing the reader from the narrated world.

The narrator can adopt the point of view of a focalizer with a specific identity. If he is the primary narrator, his account is not perceived as unreliable, because it represents the only point of view. The narrative is perceived as the description of the thoughts and attitudes of a certain character. The most effective method of presenting such a story is by free indirect discourse, in which the narrator apparently retires behind the words of the focalizer. An example of a magico-realist narrative in which the focalizer has a specific identity is "El fantasma" by Enrique Anderson Imbert.[16] The story begins with the simple constatation of a supernatural event:

> Se dió cuenta de que acababa de morirse cuando vió que su propio cuerpo, como si no fuera el suyo sino el de un doble, se desplomaba sobre la silla y la arrastraba en la caída. Cadáver y silla quedaron tendidos sobre la alfombra, en medio de la habitación. (p.71)

By using the phrase "se dió cuenta", the narrator validates the protagonist's belief that he has died and can see his own corpse. The focalizer's realization becomes that of the narrator, and the reader has no alternative but to accept the event. The realistic description of the dark walls, dismal rain and decrepit corpse is just as precise and convincing as that of the initial supernatural event. No change in narrative voice draws the reader's attention to the difference in the nature of the events. Throughout the rest of the story, the description of the real alternates with that of the impossible. While the body with its "mofletes y arrugas, las curvas valludas de la nariz y los dos dientes amarillos, mordiéndose el labio exangüe" (p.71) is lamented by his family, the dead man's ghost tries out his newly acquired powers of flying and passing through keyholes:

> Pudo colarse por el ojo de una cerradura, pero a duras penas. El, muerto, no era una especie de virus filtrable para el que siempre hay pasos; sólo podía penetrar por las hendijas que los hombres descubren a simple vista. (pp. 72-73)

The world of the supernatural seems to be ruled by laws as rigid as those of the real world. This story is a good illustration of the "naturalization" of the supernatural in magical realism. Once the protagonist of "El fantasma" enters the world of the dead, he realizes that it is not too different from the world of the living. He had expected something else from life after death, and is disappointed by the banality of his new existence:

> ¡Qué desengaño! Había querido averiguar como era el tránsito al otro mundo. ¡Y resultaba que no había ningún otro mundo! La misma opacidad de los muros, la misma distancia entre mueble y mueble, el mismo repicar de la lluvia sobre el techo. . . . (p.71)
>
> Ya no tuvo esperanzas de una vida sobrenatural. No. No había ningún misterio. (p.72)

Whereas the supernatural in "El fantasma" is explicitly reduced to the level of the natural by the statements of the narrator, most magico-realist narrators situate the two antinomious codes on the same level of reality merely by describing them in the same way, as if there were no difference in their perception of them.

In this type of narrative, the protagonist's and focalizer's point of view is never questioned. It is irrelevant to debate whether the characters actually have supernatural experiences, as in a fairy tale, or whether the story is merely an unmediated account of their fantasies and hallucinations. Since the natural and the supernatural are inextricably interwoven in the fictitious world, there is no hierarchy of reality. The supernatural events are not perceived as part of a dream, and thus as belonging to a secondary level. They are just as valid as the realistic framework of the story. It would be an unjustifiable extrapolation of the narrative if we explained the plot of "El fantasma" as the daydreams of a man who is bored with life and wonders what happens after death, how his family will react to his passing away, and what they will do in the future.

Many magico-realist stories and novels lend themselves to a psychoanalytical interpretation, or a symbolical analysis. But this is a secondary level of meaning, just as it is in the fantastic. It should not overshadow the literal level, since this is what determines into which category the narrative falls. If we analyse three literary texts belonging to different modes such as magical realism, the fantastic and the marvellous, it is more important to determine the characteristics that distinguish one story from another than to compare the similarities in symbolical meaning, unless we are concerned exclusively with a thematic study. Manuel Mujica Lainez' "La galera",[17] for example, can be interpreted as a symbolical story about a guilty conscience. The woman who has murdered her sister for money is haunted by her crime and sees the victim's ghost, which is the creation of her tormented conscience. But this apparition is not explained by a rational mediator. The narrator adopts the point of view of the protagonist, and describes the ghost in the same manner he would describe any other character in the story. Catalina's perceptions are not invalidated, but authenticated, by the manner of presentation. She does not think that she sees a ghost --she actually sees one:

> Catalina advierte dentro del coche la presencia de una nueva pasajera. La ve detrás del cendal de humo, brumosa, espectral. . . . Catalina reconoce, en la penumbra del atavío, en la neblina que todo lo invade, la fisonomía angulosa de su hermana muerta. (p.162)

The words advierte, ve, and reconoce could be merely a device for rendering her hallucination more vividly. But nowhere in the story is the existence of the ghost questioned. Even the other passengers see it when they board the coach (p.163). Catalina is not surprised at the appearance of the spectre, and her only reaction is fear. There is no rational explanation of the phenomenon, as the narrator explicitly states that nobody saw the veiled figure enter the coach. Whereas there is always the suggestion of a rational explanation in the fantastic, a magico-realist text prevents the reader from even considering a rational solution. There is no need to resolve a contradiction, since the events are not perceived as contradictory within the framework of the narrative. What is contradictory is the attitude which the reader must adopt. On the one hand, he considers the focalizer as unreliable and believes nothing of what he perceives. But on the other, he accepts everything in the story, and never wonders whether an event is real or imaginary in the fictitious world.

Cortázar's "Lejana"[18] is another magico-realist story in which the focalizer has a definite identity, the plot can be interpreted psychoanalytically, and the narrator prevents the reader from perceiving the natural and the supernatural as antinomious. Alina is convinced of the existence of her double in Budapest. Her realistic description of this imaginary figure alternates with that of the tedium of daily life as a wealthy young woman in Buenos Aires. The theme of the double is introduced almost immediately, but not in the form of indirect allusion or mysterious foreboding, as it would be in the fantastic. As the protagonist tries to overcome her boredom by creating anagrams, she discovers that the configuration of the letters of her name can be changed to read: "Es la reina y. . ." (p.36). This meaning suggests the opposite to her --an indigent and shivering woman in Budapest. From this point on, Alina constantly thinks about the beggar, whose sufferings she can feel while she is being entertained by her well-to-do friends. Her perception of her actual surroundings is continually interrupted by the vivid visualization of her namesake in Budapest. The latter is another part of her, which is distant both physically and socially. While she feels the cold penetrating the rags of her double, her friends know nothing about this counterpart, whom they would hate if they did. Reality and imagination are presented as a coherent whole, as Alina's mind is divided between her two identities:

> Porque a mí, a la lejana, no la quieren. Es la
> parte que no quieren y cómo no me va a desgarrar
> por dentro sentir que me pegan o la nieve me
> entra por los zapatos cuando Luis María baila
> conmigo y su mano en la cintura me va subiendo

> como un calor a mediodía, un sabor a naranjas fuertes o tacuaras chicoteadas, y a ella le pegan y es imposible resistir y entonces tengo que decirle a Luis María que no estoy bien, que es la humedad, entre esa nieve que no siento, que no siento y me está entrando por los zapatos. (p.38)

Her day-dreams have become an obsession, and seem to be more real to her than the insipid social life around her. As Alina is the sole focalizer and narrator of the story, most of which is in the form of a diary, no objective observer establishes a hierarchy between dream and reality. Contradictions such as "esa nieve que no siento, que no siento y me está entrando por los zapatos" are not perceived as such, since Alina does not consider the simultaneous presence of two different minds in the same person as antinomious. Even when the diary form is replaced by third person narration, the point of view remains the same. Alina is still the focalizer. Although she temporarily becomes the object of focalization when she is described as "rápida y curiosa. . . buscando vagamente algo" (p.47), the change of perspective and narrative voice do not invalidate the point of view of Alina's diary. Since the third person narrator uses internal focalization, by which her thoughts and feelings, and not only her external appearance, are described, a coherent perspective is maintained throughout the story. The third person narrator does not present the meeting of Alina and her double on the bridge in Budapest and its consequences as a strange and inexplicable phenomenon. Since he has no identity, he merely adopts the point of view of the protagonist. Alina's transformation into a beggar appears like a logical conclusion to the story. In the final sentences, the narrator cedes his position of focalizer to the former Alina, who suddenly feels the cold of the wet snow and sees the usurper of her identity walk away, wearing the real Alina's clothes and appearing "lindísima en su sastre gris" (p.49). The change of narrative voice in the last few paragraphs has given authenticity to the diary of Alina Reyes and prevented the reader from considering it as the unreliable account of an insane woman. The story is not a realistic narration of an obsession, but the account of the supernatural materialization of it. The device of authenticating the protagonist's point of view by introducing a third person narrator is just as effective in magical realism as it is in the fantastic, but the effect produced is different. In "Chac Mool", for example, the third person narrator is objective and rational. His world view contrasts sharply with that of Filiberto's diary. Since the realistic perspective is dominant throughout the story, the description of supernatural events is perceived as an unreliable méta-récit. The use of the third person narrator at the end of the story serves the purpose of authenticating some of the information in Filiberto's diary, and thus making the latter's account more credible. Since the primary narrator adheres to conventional norms of reason, his constatation at the end of the story is seen as reliable. This reinforces the antinomy between the rational and the irrational. Two contradictory world views which are presented as mutually exclusive have validity in the story, and the resulting antinomy is unacceptable. In "Lejana", however, the third person narrator does not represent exclusive objectivity and reason. He has no identity which could provide a contrast to Alina's obsession. Since only one point of view is represented, there can be no antinomy in the text. The change in narrative voice authenticates the supernatural, but only within the particular perspective of Alina's diary, and not within the guidelines of a rational world view. No conventional laws of reason are threatened, as they are in "Chac Mool".

The three short stories we have just discussed are based on supernatural motifs which could very well occur in the fantastic. Astral projection, ghosts and doubles are common motifs, but they depend on the context in which they are presented for their effect. In a magico-realist narrative, there is no discrepancy between them and the realistic framework. In the fantastic, on the other hand, they contradict the laws of that particular fictitious world. In "Lejana", for example, Alina's double is not presented as anything out of the ordinary. On the contrary, it seems logical to her that the meaning of an anagram of her name, "es la reina y. . .", implies the existence of the opposite. The double, which is created by language in the protagonist's mind and finally materializes, does not destroy the coherence of her world. The double in a fantastic narrative, on the other hand, threatens the stability of conventional codes of perception of reality. In The Double by F. M. Dostoyevsky, the protagonist Golyadkin refuses to believe his own senses when he perceives a figure which resembles him in every detail. The first time that he meets his double, he wonders whether he is dreaming.[19] The strange phenomenon terrifies him:

> 'What's wrong with me?' thought Mr. Golyadkin, setting off on his way again, and still looking round occasionally. He felt a strange new sensation coming over him --a mixture of fear and anguish. . . . A feverish shudder ran through every nerve. It was an unbearably dreadful moment. (p.75)

He entertains the suspicion that he has gone mad (p.77), and refuses to admit that he recognized the figure as his double: "not for all the tea in China would he have spoken his name, or been willing to admit that that over there was so-and-so whose father was so-and-so" (p.79). When he finally admits that the stranger is his double, his reaction is that of a typical victim in a fantastic narrative. Although he refuses to believe in the supernatural, he is frightened by it, and looks for a rational explanation:

> But at the same time it was all so peculiar, incomprehensible and absurd, it all seemed so impossible even, that really one could hardly credit it. Mr. Golyadkin would have been only too ready to regard the whole thing as a delirious fancy, a momentary derangement of the imagination or a clouding of the mind, had he not fortunately known from bitter experience of life the lengths to which a man may sometimes be driven by malice, and the furious extremes to which an enemy avenging pride and honour may sometimes go. (p.83)

When traditional supernatural motifs are used in a story, it is often difficult to determine whether it belongs to magical realism or the fantastic. In "Lejana" and The Double, the narrator explicitly tells the reader how to interpret the narrative. In "La isla a mediodía", on the other hand, the reader must adopt a more active role if he wants to interpret the text as either magico-realist or fantastic. The narrator does not inform us that the existence of a double is logically impossible. He does not even tell us that there is a double. The reader can only deduce this on the basis of certain textual indications. On the one hand, authorial reticence makes it more difficult for the reader to classify the story, and justifies his considering it as a borderline case. But on the other, the introduction of the logical contradiction without any explanation produces an antinomy which cannot be resolved. In the case of magical realism, the casual introduction of the theme of the double at the beginning of the story, as in the case of "Lejana", informs the reader that the supernatural and the natural are not to be considered as antinomious.

The presentation of a coherent world view in which the rational and the irrational are not perceived as contradictory is somewhat easier if the author creates a specific code which can be identified with a Weltanschauung characterizing a society radically different from ours. The focalizer is then not a particular individual living in a world governed by reason, but an entire culture. This type of magical realism is found in Hombres de maíz and in the narratives of Demetrio Aguilera Malta. In the latter's novel Siete lunas y siete serpientes,[20] the real, the imaginary and the mythical are fused in a coherent magical world view, as the narrator adopts the collective perspective of the "primitive" inhabitants of a small Latin American community. Since they do not distinguish between the natural and the supernatural, the narrator does not present these two worlds as antinomious. A realistic situation involving the exploitation of the indigenous population by a rich outsider, class and racial struggles and general social problems, is described from the point of view of a society which believes in the devil, lycanthropy and animals with human properties. Both the real and the supernatural exist on the same level, and both are presented in the same poetic manner.

Crisóstomo Chalena mercilessly exploits the inhabitants of Santorontón by selling them water to which they otherwise have no access. He has a monopoly on all the water because he is in league with the devil, who makes rain fall only on special zinc roofs that have been installed to catch it. As the Indians cannot survive without this water, they sell all their possessions, including their own bodies, to Chalena. The description of this exploitation is detailed and lyrical:

> Más tarde, algunos dieron las piezas de más valor que poseían: Doblones que la marea había escupido sobre la arena de las playas. Piezas de orfebrería prehistórica encontradas en las tumbas de sus antepasados aborígenes. Joyas iluminando los fémures y tibias de los esqueletos encuclillados en vasijas funerarias. (pp. 141-142)

The realistic level constantly alternates with others, such as the improbable, the metaphorical, and the impossible. Chalena's attempt to grow a rose bush in Tolón's hand seems utterly preposterous, but its description is no less lyrical than that of the Santoronteños' increasing poverty:

> Don Chalena regando el Rosal. ¡Maldito Rosal! El Potro de Humo. ¡Maldito Rosal! La raíz en la carne. ¡Maldito Rosal! Tolón medio loco. ¡Maldito Rosal! La Muda clavada con manos y pies. ¡Maldito Rosal! ¡Maldito Rosal! Enraizado en la tierra. En la mano. En los sueños. ¡Maldito Rosal! (p.147)

Chalena is described as a huge voracious toad:

> Una sonrisa voraz de rapina remeció la boca al batracio. (p.143)
> Sobándose las manos. Abriendo la boca -- Boca. Bocón. Boquete. Boca-buzón. Boca-pozo. Boca-cráter -- (p.145)
> La Boca-tonel. Boca-pipa. Boca-tanque se arqueaba. Malévola. (p.146)
> Batracio crecido. (p.147)
> Sapo hinchado de sapos. Aborto monstruoso de un ventrópodo absurdo. (p.148)

His mouth, symbolizing insatiable greed, is transformed in the Indians' eyes into a bottomless well and crater engulfing their possessions and their very lives. The rest of his body is obliterated by the rapacious mouth. The poignancy of the poetical and expressionistic language portrays the Indians' feeling of frustration and utter helplessness. The narrator gives us their point of view, not by explaining and describing, but by directly rendering their reactions to the situation. Chalena does not appear as a monstrous mouth --he actually becomes one, as the grotesqueness of his ruthlessness prevents one from noticing any human qualities in him. It is only one step from the metaphorical description of Chalena's greed and callousness to the concretization of his evil nature in the devil. The Indians are convinced that Chalena is in league with Satan. While all their wells suddenly run dry, the houses which Chalena has equipped with zinc roofs collect prodigious amounts of water during a normally dry season. The figure of the devil is introduced as casually as if it were that of a human being. While Chalena is disconsolately grumbling about the difficulties he is having with the Indians, the devil appears and pays him a visit:

> Era el Mismísimo. La luz de sus ojos llameantes le servía de linterna. Estaba medio encogido. Melancólico. Con la punta del rabo se rascaba la barbilla. (p.328)

Both are bewailing the failure of their evil plans. The devil complains that poverty is so much more prevalent than opulence that most people cannot afford to have any vices. Just as in fairy tales and legends, the devil is considered as part of reality, and nobody doubts his existence. The description of his human attributes of melancholy and indecisiveness place him on the same level of reality as the other characters in the novel. The devil's adversary is humanized in the same way. Padre Cándido frequently has prolonged discussions with the figure of Christ on the cross, who speaks to him as if he were a human friend. The witch doctor Bulu-Bulu is metamorphosed into a tiger, and disintegrates into various parts in order to inform his friends and relatives in many places at once that his daughter will be getting married. His transformation back into a human being is described as if it were nothing out of the ordinary:

> Cuando sintió que había avisado a todos los suyos, Bulu-Bulu-Tigre se fue reintegrando. Rehaciendo. Los pedazos del cuerpo volvieron a soldársele. Se marchó su cola. Se marcharon, también, los moteados rojinegros de su piel. (p.280)

The reader does not question the supernatural, as it is presented just like the natural. Both belong to the same level of fictitious reality, because they are focalized by a culture which does not distinguish between the real and the imaginary. Their dreams and myths are as real to them as the actual events taking place around them. Nowhere is the coherent world view invalidated by that of an outside observer. The reader need not question whether the narrator is reliable or not, because our criteria of logic and perception do not apply to the society depicted in the novel. The reader's role is to understand the working of a different mentality, and not to judge or criticize it. The author does not want to titillate the reader with mystery and suspense, but to inform him of his vision of Indian society as well as to create a work of art which can be appreciated for its expressionism, lyrical style and coherent structure. The aesthetic motivation is as important as the social and political.

The magico-realist author creates a convincing world view which is radically different from our own. It may be based on Western superstition, such as ghosts and doubles, or it may be based on a culture with a different perception of reality entirely, such as that of the Indians of Central America. Magical realism, however, is not confined to these two traditional manifestations. Since the author is free to create whatever he wants, he need not limit himself to conventional patterns of writing. The magical realist must not necessarily use well-known themes of the supernatural. He can create his own fictitious world free from lycanthropy, demons and ghosts, as long as he adheres to the essential characteristics of magical realism. In "Axolotl",[21] for example, Cortázar demonstrates the absolute freedom of the writer. The story defies all logic, adheres to few conventions, and alludes explicitly to the act of writing. The salamander, who is the focalizer and first person narrator at the end of the story, hopes that the man watching him in the Jardin des Plantes will write a book about him:

> Y en esta soledad final, a la que él ya no vuelve, me consuela pensar que acaso va a escribir sobre nosotros, creyendo imaginar un cuento va a escribir todo esto sobre los axolotl. (p.155)

The narrator informs us at the beginning of the story that he is a salamander, and proceeds to tell us how he became one. He used to be a man, who became obsessed with the salamanders when he visited the aquarium. After studying them intensely for many days, comparing them to the Aztecs and feeling sorry for their gloomy surroundings in the damp aquarium, he suddenly sees his own face looking at him from the outside of the glass window. He realizes that he is now a salamander and that there is no communication between his present and former self. His only hope is that his species will be immortalized in writing by the visitor to the aquarium.

The preposterous transformation is mentioned casually in the first paragraph of the story:

> Hubo un tiempo en que yo pensaba mucho en los axolotl. Iba a verlos al acuario del Jardin des Plantes y me quedaba horas mirándolos, observando su inmovilidad, sus oscuros movimientos. Ahora soy un axolotl. (p.149)

No surprise is expressed by the narrator in the face of such an unusual event. The statement that he is an axolotl is made in the same way as that of his visiting the aquarium. The real and the preposterous exist on the same level, just as they do in "El fantasma", "La galera" and "Lejana". The reader is told immediately that he must take the information given at face value. There is no mystery to unravel, and no suspense of the kind that we find in stories of the fantastic. The author presents a fictitious world entirely different from our own which is not supposed to be questioned. The reader, on the other hand, can only enjoy the narrative if he allows himself to forget that the events that are described are impossible. The reader may find it more difficult to accept the transformation of a human being into a salamander than the appearance of a ghost, because the latter theme is far more common in our culture and literature than that in "Axolotl". But there is no logical reason why two stories with preposterous themes, one of them well known and the other not, should belong to different genres or modes. The author of "Axolotl" demonstrates that the impossible in literature does not have to fit into a literary tradition. In order to be considered as magical realism, it simply has to appear natural, and coexist with the real. In "Axolotl", the narrator explicitly states that he experiences no surprise when he undergoes the transformation:

> Sin transición, sin sorpresa, vi mi cara contra
> el vidrio, en vez del axolotl vi mi cara contra
> el vidrio, la vi fuera del acuario, la vi del
> otro lado del vidrio. Entonces mi cara se
> apartó y yo comprendí. (p.154)

He even stresses the unexceptional nature of this event by stating that the only thing he found surprising was that he still thought and felt like a human being. There is no antinomy between the supernatural and the natural. At the same time, the realistic framework is presented in some detail. We find out about the protagonist's visit to the Jardin des Plantes, the information he obtains from an encyclopaedia, and his reactions to the animals in the aquarium. There is nothing that would differentiate the style from that in a completely realistic short story. And yet the supernatural does not appear to be added as an afterthought to the account of a man's obsession. It is the absurd yet predictable dénouement of the plot. The obsession is carried to its extreme, just as it is in "Lejana". The transformation is merely the logical conclusion of a realistic situation, yet logical only within a fictitious world that allows the complete, even if absurd, development of a theme.

Another example of the destruction of antinomy by the creation of a "magical" world view not based on any particular cultural perspective is Carpentier's "Viaje a la semilla".[22] An old man, who is watching the demolition of a house, uses his magic wand to reverse time. Just as in a cinema reel played backwards, the stones and tiles of the mansion suddenly start flying upwards until it is standing again:

> Los cuadros de mármol, blancos y negros volaron
> a los pisos, vistiendo la tierra. Las piedras,
> con saltos certeros, fueron a cerrar los boquetes
> de las murallas. . . . La casa creció, traída
> nuevamente a sus proporciones habituales,

pudorosa y vestida. (p.59)

On the level of the plot, an old magician reverses time. But his "cayado", or magic wand, symbolizes the writer who has the same absolute power over time and matter. His wand is a pen, and the objects he transforms are conventional concepts. Just as a magician is able to reconstruct a demolished house on the level of the enunciated, so the author can describe a familiar process backwards. The enunciation parallels the actions of the magician in the story. Instead of simply explaining that the old man reversed the clock, the narrator describes the process in detail. He tells the story as if time were indeed flowing backwards.

In the world of magic, there is no boundary between the real and the unreal, because everything can become real. The impossible can be done, and the preposterous becomes ordinary. The world of fiction is similar, and, just like magic, is restricted by a number of codes which provide internal coherence. Every genre adheres to certain guidelines, the departure from which leads to inversimilitude. Although some genres are rigidly defined, the restrictions are frequently not noticed. The structure, style and themes are so familiar that the reader does not question them. The hero of a tragedy, for example, must behave strictly according to convention, even if his actions are utterly improbable if they are taken out of context. Magical realism also adheres to conventions, but these are not as strict as in other modes or genres. The author of a magico-realist narrative has a great measure of freedom. He is working within one of the most flexible modes, where the nature of the real can be as varied as that of the supernatural. The two levels can be juxtaposed in any number of ways. The impossible may be described with realistic detail, and the real may coexist with the unreal in a uni-dimensional narrative. The narrator can be an inanimate object or an animal, time may be reversed, and the laws of conventional logic can be changed. Nothing is questioned in a narrative which posits nothing as exclusively real, since the latter is as valid as the impossible. Whether the perspective presented in the narrative is that of primitive natives, a salamander, an occultist or a mentally disturbed person, it must be accepted literally. It is not judged according to conventional standards of thinking.

"Viaje a la semilla" illustrates this freedom. The narrator simply chooses to reverse the usually accepted manner of describing the vicissitudes of the protagonist. Instead of telling the story of his birth, youth, marriage, middle age and death, he narrates Don Marcial's life backwards. First the house is demolished, then filled with mourners at the protagonist's death. Don Marcial is subsequently shown on his death bed, afterwards as a widower, and so on until he returns to the womb and the house is transformed into a wasteland. Throughout the course of the story the clock goes backwards, the piano regresses to a clavichord, and wrinkles disappear as Don Marcial and his wife grow younger:

> El piano regresó al clavicordio. Las palmas perdían anillos. Las enredaderas soltaban la primera cornisa. Blanquearon las ojeras de la Ceres y los capiteles parecieron recién tallados. Más fogoso, Marcial solía pasarse tardes enteras abrazando a la Marquesa. Borrábanse patas de gallina, ceños y papadas, y las carnes tornaban a su dureza. (p.63)

Time is actually shown in reverse as the trees grow smaller and the furniture appears larger to the shrinking child. In this story, the narrator does [illegible] adopt the perspective of an individual, as in "El fantasma" or "La galera", or of a particular culture, as in *Siete lunas y siete serpientes*. The focalizer is not specified or characterized except by the ability to perceive time in reverse. He is an illustration of the omnipotent author. His point of view is not restricted by obsessions or superstition, but by a temporary focus of a particular type that is not based on specific cultural manifestations. It is the structure of the narrative that creates the supernatural, and not the nature of the events if taken out of context and not seen in relation to their unconventional chronological order. The descriptions of the house and the family residing in it would be realistic and unexceptional if the time sequence were reversed.

Just as magical realism can be created by presenting otherwise normal processes in an unaccustomed order, it can arise out of the interplay of several realistic sequences in an abnormal way. The resulting antinomy is resolved, however, by the ludic attitude of the narrator. In Cortázar's "Continuidad de los parques",[23] two different levels of reality are jumbled to produce an unconventional perspective of the world. Fiction and reality, or what Juan Armando Epple calls "realidad objectiva" and "realidad ficticia",[24] converge at the end of the story when a character from a book that the protagonist is reading assaults the reader-character within the primary, "objective" sequence. The ending is so obviously illogical that the reader is not justified in trying to find a rational explanation. The coexistence of the two different levels of reality is presented without any of the devices of the fantastic which create antinomy. There is no dramatized narrator who believes in the exclusive validity of the real, and no protagonist who tries to rationalize events. The two sequences are presented without any narratorial explanation or obvious signs of subjectivity. They are simply juxtaposed and then jumbled. The narrator appears as a "Magister Ludi, que ofrece al lector opciones nuevas frente al mundo, de tal manera que éste termina ofreciéndose ante sus ojos y su conciencia como un laberinto que debe recorrer por sí solo para entenderlo".[25] The "world" which is presented in an unconventional manner is the world of fiction, with its endless creative possibilities. The reader of magical realism must be willing to suspend any notions of what is possible or impossible, and participate actively in the ludic creation of an absurd, yet ordered, perspective.

CHAPTER FOUR

AUTHORIAL RETICENCE

Every text reveals the presence of its author. There is no such thing as a completely impersonal narrative. As Wayne Booth points out: "We must never forget that though the author can to some extent choose his disguises, he can never choose to disappear."[1] Absolute authorial reticence is a contradiction in terms. If somebody is an author, then he obviously cannot be silent. "Authorial reticence" is a relative term which applies to the absence of obvious intrusions and manipulation on the part of the author. Explicit moral judgments and comments on the text or act of narration are only extreme forms of authorial mediation. Every selection of dialogue and every description of character pre-suppose a subjective creator. Paradoxically, one of the most effective forms of guiding the reactions of the reader is authorial reticence, not in the restricted sense of absence of moralizing, but in the wider sense of withholding information and explanations. An object which is described in such a way that the most important characteristics are intimated, but deliberately not mentioned, arouses greater interest than one that is described in great detail. The reader faced with the former situation wonders why the narrator is silent about essential information. As he tries to concretize the image of the fictitious object on the basis of insufficient data, his imagination is aroused to a greater degree than if he were reading a description in which the omissions are due solely to lack of importance in the narrative. Similarly, withholding important information at the beginning of a text and revealing it at the end creates suspense. A mystery which is left unexplained incites the reader to resolve it himself. In all these cases, authorial reticence emphasizes the object or situation by presenting it in an unconventional way. This device is very similar to what Šklovskij calls ostranjenje, or singularization. According to the Russian Formalist, we normally recognize a common object by a few well known traits, instead of actually perceiving it. This process is the automatization of perception. Through art, however, we are made aware of the details which usually go unnoticed:

> Le but de l'art, c'est de donner une sensation de l'objet comme vision et non pas comme reconnaissance; le procédé de l'art est le procédé de singularisation des objets et le procédé qui consiste à obscurcir la forme, à augmenter la difficulté et la durée de la perception.[2]

If the word or salient characteristics that identify an object are not used in the description of it, the reader's attention is drawn to the unaccustomed manner of presentation, and thus to the nature of the object. In this way, the object is not only emphasized, but becomes a source of mystery. Either the reader is able to place the object or situation within everyday conventions, in which case the mystery is simply that of beauty or creation, or he cannot integrate it within usual norms of understanding, in which case the mystery creates uncertainty about its nature, and a feeling of disarray in the reader. The latter type of singularization occurs in the fantastic, where authorial reticence serves to maintain the ambiguity of an event, object or situation throughout the narrative, and prevents the reader from resolving the antinomy between the natural and the supernatural. In magical realism, on the other hand, singularization is used for a different purpose. The world is described in an unconventional way in order to widen our perspectives of reality, without producing an atmosphere of strangeness and uncertainty. Although a situation may be focused from the point of view of a madman or a superstitious person, the reader accepts this perspective. Describing something from an unusual viewpoint is in itself singularization, but in magical realism, our attention is not, paradoxically, drawn to the strangeness of the object. On the contrary, it is presented as if that particular type of perception were quite ordinary for the reader. The devices employed are the opposite of those used in singularization. The reader is carried away by the matter-of-fact descriptions so that he does not have the opportunity of questioning the fictitious world view. Authorial reticence plays an essential role in this naturalization of the unusual. If the narrator explained the beliefs of the strange focalizer, the reader's attention would be drawn to that particular perception of the world. The focalizer would no longer be the fictitious character who interprets his surroundings in a manner which is different from ours, but the narrator who points out the strangeness of the character's perspective. The text would thus be an example of exoticism, or even of anthropology.

The Fantastic

The antinomy between the natural and the supernatural in a tale of the fantastic produces a reaction of uneasiness in the implied reader. Unable to give up conventional perception and logical reasoning, the reader is disturbed by an event or object which seems to contradict the normal order. The text, which affirms the orthodox world view held by the reader throughout most of the narrative, prevents him from accepting the apparently supernatural occurrence within the fictitious world. If a rational explanation contradicts the codes of the text, and an irrational one seems preposterous, the situation becomes disturbing. On the one hand, it is an intellectual challenge to resolve the impossible contradiction, and on the other, it is a source of anxiety when the illogical and the unacceptable occur. The text produces a certain frisson or chill if the reader allows himself to be carried away by the narrative. The unexplained situation appears as uncanny or unheimlich. It is obvious that an explanation of the mystery would destroy the antinomy essential to the arousal of disarray in the implied reader. By explaining an object or situation, we integrate it within certain norms that regulate our conventional way of perceiving reality. The supernatural then becomes part of the natural, which is largely equated with the explicable. It is thus essential that the author refrains from resolving the antinomy. His intrusion would destroy the uncertainty necessary to the fantastic. This is one of the reasons why Maupassant rewrote his first version of "Le Horla".[3] In the story written in 1886, the incredible narration of the mentally deranged patient is authenticated by his doctor, Marrande. The latter confirms that three of the protagonist's neighbours underwent a similar experience, and that in every case the milk and water which they had left in a sealed container disappeared overnight. Although the doctor affirms that he is uncertain about what has actually happened, the presence of the reliable witness who confirms the strange circumstances obliterates the uncertainty of the text to a certain extent. Moreover, the protagonist is not the only person haunted by the disquieting presence. In the 1887 version, the events are related in the form of a diary, and no physician authenticates the strange situation confronting the protagonist. No commentary is provided on the nature and validity of the diary. Since the author of the diary, contrary to the first version of the story, is the only victim of the mysterious horla, the authenticity of his experience can be doubted. As Louis Vax points out, "le narrateur du Horla-nouvelle nous plonge dans l'incertitude: le rédacteur du journal est-il un malade qui délire ou un homme lucide gagné par un mal inconnu?"[4]

If the author intrudes to explain what is apparently supernatural, we leave the domain of the fantastic. This is the case with Ann Radcliffe's romances, where the protagonist is faced with the uncanny, the terrifying and the mysterious. They are examples of the surnaturel expliqué, in which anything that seems supernatural is explained rationally at the end. Authorial intrusion can also transform the virtual fantastic into the occult. A pseudo-scientific explanation destroys the mystery in the case of Bioy Casares' story "En memoria de Paulina"[5], where the dead lover's ghost that appears to the protagonist turns out to be the projected phantasm of his rival's jealousy:

> . . . mi horrible explicación aclara los hechos
> que parecían misteriosos. . . .
> Nuestro pobre amor no arrancó de la tumba

> a Paulina. No hubo fantasma de Paulina. Yo abracé un monstruoso fantasma de los celos de mi rival. (p.21)

The same technique is employed in Bioy Casares' "La trama celeste",[6] in which the strange adventures of Captain Morris are explained at great length at the end of the story. There is a plurality of worlds which are similar but distinct. Although it is usually impossible to travel from one world to the next, Captain Morris was transported, by an extraordinary stroke of chance, into a world which was almost similar to his own, but built upon the Carthaginian instead of the Roman civilization. Many readers would react negatively to such a preposterous explanation given in a serious tone. Both "En Memoria de Paulina" and "La trama celeste" might be good examples of the fantastic without the final authorial intrusion. The explanation destroys the structure of the fantastic which characterizes the rest of the narrative. A supernatural situation that is intimated moves us more than one that is affirmed, but that we cannot accept. The uncertainty within the fantastic makes the supernatural more palatable for the enlightened reader. What Horst Conrad points out with regard to the Schauerroman applies equally well to the fantastic:

> Um dem aufgeklärten Leser den Genuss des Irrationalen vorbehaltlos zu ermöglichen, musste das Gespensterhafte, Schaudererregende ganz im Unbestimmten and Unklaren bleiben. Die auf ausnahmsloser Erklärbarkeit aller Dinge fussende rationale Grundeinstellung des Lesers durfte lediglich irritiert, aber nicht ad absurdum geführt werden.[7]

While the fantastic asks the reader to react to the apparently supernatural according to his conventional view of reality, the occult demands acceptance of the preposterous. Most readers would consider Booth's remarks about a "bad book" pertinent to this type of story:

> A bad book, on the other hand, is often most clearly recognizable because the implied author asks that we judge according to norms that we cannot accept.[8]

Although we cannot condemn a book because the opinions of the implied author do not coincide with ours, it is more effective if he suggests, rather than ostensibly trying to persuade.

In the occult, the supernatural is accepted and explained, and thus becomes part of the natural order of things. An analogous situation exists in the exotic marvellous. This term is used by Todorov to refer to a type of literature in which the supernatural is presented as natural in a foreign environment:

> On rapporte ici des événements surnaturels sans les présenter comme tels; le récepteur implicite de ces contes est censé ne pas connaître les régions où se déroulent les événements; par conséquent il n'a pas de raisons de les mettre en doute.[9]

An example of this is Bioy Casares' "La sierva ajena",[10] in which the supernatural is introduced right at the beginning of the story and treated as if it were merely extraordinary. Only the reader's knowledge that it is impossible to reduce a living human being to the size of a puppet makes this story supernatural, because the textual indications lead one to believe that such a feat is possible, and indeed common amongst certain African tribes. When one of the characters in the story tells the other guests about this type of mummification, and about a young woman who became attached to a man who had undergone this process, his account is not questioned. The extraordinary, which is presented and explained, becomes part of accepted reality.

The fantastic, however, depends on authorial reticence for its effect, and indeed its existence. Of the several types of reticence, the deliberate absence of an explanation is one of the most important. Provided with the facts, but not with a solution of the mystery, the reader must actively reconstruct the various codes of the narrative and search for an explanation himself. He thus becomes a participant in the game of fiction, fully aware of the author's intentions and consenting to abide by the rules of that type of narrative. He knows that he will never be able to resolve the antinomy in the text. Todorov calls the uncertainty of the reader hesitation about whether an event is natural or supernatural. Vax refers to the same type of uncertainty when he stresses the importance of ambiguity in the fantastic. According to him, the most effective stories of that mode are those in which there are two levels of interpretation --one that is evident, and another that is suggested. The reader cannot decide on the basis of the text which is the correct one:

> Or, si _La Vénus d'Ille_ passe pour le modèle du récit ambigu, c'est parce qu'il est impossible au lecteur de bonne foi de décider entre le normal et le prodigieux. Son embarras est celui du juge qui n'a pas assez de preuves pour conclure à la culpabilité, mais dispose de trop de présomptions pour trancher en faveur de l'innocence. L'ambiguïté des contes fantastiques ne porte donc pas sur le sens des discours, mais sur la nature des choses.[11]

Although hesitation of the protagonist or the narrator is present in many stories of the fantastic, the predominant reaction of both the fictitious character and the implied reader is one of general uncertainty. Even if the situation described by the narrator is obviously supernatural, it is still unacceptable within a logically ordered world. As long as the narrator does not explain the situation satisfactorily, the reader is left with a series of events which he cannot understand.

In "La Vénus d'Ille", the narrator expounds the mystery with all its details, but withholds an explanation. The assertion of M. Alphonse's wife that he was crushed by the statue is unacceptable to a person who does not believe in the supernatural. The prosecuting officer believes that she is mad, and the narrator does not deny this. The possibility that the man who threatened M. Alphonse killed him must be discarded because the suspect has an irrefutable alibi. At the end of the story, the narrator informs us that he has never been able to elucidate the "mystérieuse catastrophe".[12] Although the only explanation suggested by the text is supernatural, the narrator refrains from verbalizing it.

The same technique is employed in "Chac Mool", where the presence of the Indian at the end of the story remains a mystery. Filiberto's account of the metamorphosis of the statue into an animate being is neither denied nor confirmed by the primary narrator. In both stories, the supernatural is affirmed by an unreliable narrator, suggested by the rest of the narrative, and not refuted by a narrator who does not know how to explain the mystery.

In Cortázar's "La isla a mediodía", no explanation is offered by a character within the story. The supernatural is created merely by the use of logically impossible focalization. The reader is given little guidance in finding a suitable explanation. Only a very close reading of the text will permit the reader even to recognize the nature of the supernatural. "La noche boca arriba" offers even less of an explanation of the confusing narrative sequences. The text suggests no simple supernatural solution, as do "La Main" and "La Vénus d'Ille". The reader is not told how to interpret the events in the story. Authorial reticence reaches a point where the reader must either be content with an unremediably inexplicable situation, or extrapolate in order to find a preposterous supernatural solution. The intent of the narrator, however, is obviously to leave the reader in a state of absolute confusion.

In many examples of the fantastic, the supernatural is directly presented by the narrator, and not by a secondary character such as Mme Alphonse in "La Vénus d'Ille". The narrator adopts the perspective of the primary focalizer, thus authenticating the story. In Amparo Dávila's "El entierro",[13] the protagonist thinks about his past life as he lies dying at home. When he knows that death is imminent, he decides to see the familiar streets of his city for the last time. He leaves the house without being seen by anybody and walks around for a while before noticing a funeral procession. The profusion of flowers and wreaths reminds him of his own funeral, which he had been planning meticulously for some time. His reflection about the dead man is the same as the one he had been hoping people would make about him after his death: "entonces se trataba de una persona importante" (p.148). The car carrying the mourners is identical to his, and the passengers are his wife and children. Although the reader already suspects that the funeral is his own, the text does not state this. Neither does it suggest a rational explanation, such as the possibility of his family's attendance at somebody else's funeral about which they did not tell him because of his serious illness. The final sentence of the story reinforces the supernatural interpretation. His wife covers her mouth to stifle a scream. The implication is that she has seen her husband's ghost:

> Al pasar el coche pudo distinguir en su interior las caras desencajadas y pálidas de sus hijos y a su mujer que, sacudida por los sollozos, se tapaba la boca con un pañuelo para no gritar. (p.148)

The absence of an explanation is essential to the effect of this story. An explicit supernatural ending would appear absurd in a realistic narrative in which there is no suggestion of another dimension before the final scene. Even if the code of the supernatural had been developed throughout the story, an uncertain ending is more disquieting, because the reader is confused about what actually happened. On re-reading the last few paragraphs, he will find the possibility of a rational explanation. Before the description of the sick man's excursion into the streets, the narrator informs us that the protagonist was on the verge of falling asleep, and thinking about his final walk outside. Although the narrator does not adopt a different type of focalization in the final scene to suggest that the dying man is dreaming, the fact that he was falling asleep and had been constantly preoccupied with his own funeral gives validity to this interpretation. However, his wife's scream as she is driving in the funeral procession makes us question the rational explanation. She must obviously have seen something terrifying, such as the man who, she thought, was in the coffin. But then, this could be part of the dream as well.

In many cases, the narrator explicitly draws our attention to the absence of a satisfactory explanation of the mystery presented in the text. This serves the purpose of reminding the reader how to react to the story. If the code of the supernatural is developed in a convincing way, the reader may consider it as perfectly acceptable. The narrator must emphasize the antinomy of the text by rejecting the supernatural explanation and yet admitting that he has no satisfactory rational solution to offer. This is the case in "Chac Mool", where the primary narrator refuses to believe Filiberto's account of the animation of the statue, while being unable to explain the strange behaviour of his co-worker:

> No supe qué explicación darme; pensé que las lluvias excepcionalmente fuertes de ese verano, lo habían enervado. . . .[14]

The magistrate in "La Main" informs us that he had to leave the case of the mysteriously strangled man unsolved because he did not have enough evidence. He rejects the supernatural explanation, but admits that he cannot understand how the murderer could have committed the crime with the doors and windows closed: "Mais je n'ai pu savoir comment il a fait, par exemple."[15] In some cases, when no convincing supernatural solution is suggested by the text, the narrator simply expresses his inability to understand a certain phenomenon. The narrator in Vicente Barbieri's "Dos veces el mismo rostro"[16] describes the image of a human face which appeared to him in his room, and which, he later found out, belonged to a patient at the hospital. Since he had never seen the man before he entered the hospital, the vision he had in his home some time before the operation is a complete mystery to him. He begins the story by admitting this: "Contaré el caso exactamente como occurrió: para mí sigue siendo un verdadero enigma" (p.43). He does not even know whether this vision occurred in a dream or while he was awake: "Repito que no se trata de un sueño: en último caso, un sueño despierto. No sé" (p.43). The last few lines of the story are an example of the attitude of uncertainty generally expressed or implied by the narrator in the fantastic:

> ¿Qué enigma es éste? ¿Existe un mundo anterior, olvidado por nuestros sentidos? ¿Es verdad aquello de que presente y futuro son simultáneos? ¿Algún encuentro en el vasto tiempo, que más tarde se repite ante nuestros ojos asombrados de no poder recordar?
>
> Ocurrió así, y así lo cuento. ¿Alucinación? Sólo puedo decir: No sé. (p.45)

Just as important as authorial reticence with respect to logical explanation is reticence in presenting an apparently supernatural event or situation. The detailed description of the irrational in an ordered world usually destroys the fantastic. Instead, we have an example of magical realism or the absurd. If the reader is to be carried away by a plausible, yet extraordinary situation, the supernatural can only be adumbrated, or affirmed by an unreliable character whose fears are later partly confirmed by the rest of the text. The most effective stories of the fantastic are usually those in which the reader does not see the supernatural directly. Narratives in which the supernatural is explained at the end are based on this principle as well. In Anne Radcliffe's romances, for example, the reader is titillated by the description of strange sounds and shapes that suggest the presence of ghosts. According to Horst Conrad, the enlightened reader can only experience "literary" fear if the supernatural is intimated. Direct reference to it would make the situation completely unacceptable:

> Dadurch, dass das Unheimliche lediglich audibel oder als trügerischer Eindruck tachistokopistischer Phänomene hingestellt wird, kann es ebenso gut als nur potentiell gedeutet werden. Wäre das nicht möglich, so entginge dem aufgeklärtem Leser der Mitgenuss der Angst.[17]

The technique of withholding essential information is employed frequently in the fantastic. The narrator gives the reader sufficient facts so that he can deduce the supernatural explanation without actually describing the extraordinary event or situation.

Authorial reticence in the case of plot and description is used very effectively by Maupassant. In "La Main", the result of the mysterious murder and certain circumstances of the crime are described, but the confrontation of the victim with his murderer is left to the reader's imagination. Without telling the reader what happened, the narrator provides obvious guidelines as to how the crime should be interpreted. The broken chain which normally secured the desiccated hand, the five small holes in the victim's neck, and the appearance of the hand on the dead man's grave, all suggest that the hand itself was the strangler. A similar technique is used in Mérimée's "La Vénus d'Ille", where the narrator emphasizes the strange qualities of the statue, describes the sound of heavy footsteps in the night, informs us that the victim looked as if he had been crushed by an iron band, but does not actually comment on the crime. The two stories differ only slightly with respect to authorial reticence. In "La Main", the supernatural explanation is suggested only by the circumstances of the crime, where in "La Vénus d'Ille" the irrational solution is actually proposed by one of the characters in the story who allegedly saw the statue killing Alphonse. But this information is given by a secondary and unreliable narrator, whose statements are not confirmed by the primary narrator. In both cases, the supernatural event is not directly shown to the reader.

The effectiveness of this device has been recognized by most authors of the fantastic. Anderson Imbert does not describe the leap through time of Fernandez in "¿Qué voy a hacer yo con una guitarra?"; Bonifacio Lastra does not show us how the statue created by Ranieri was transformed into a woman in "Pigmalión"; and Carlos Fuentes' description of the humanization of the rain god in "Chac Mool" is not given by the primary narrator. In some cases, the supernatural event is not even described by an unreliable witness. This occurs in H. A. Murena's "El gato",[18] in which a man locks himself into a hotel room with a cat, and gradually comes to resemble the animal. After asking whether it is possible for a cat to change the life of a person, the narrator describes the transformation of the man's personality. At the beginning, the protagonist leaves his room regularly while the cat stays behind. Then he decides to imitate the animal's behaviour and spend all his time indoors. After a while, his seclusion and inactivity become pleasant, and he ends up only eating and looking at book covers for ten minutes every day. He develops a keener distinction of colour and sense of smell. One day he is terrified by the voices of some women who remind him of a person he knew in the past. But although they are standing right outside his door, he cannot understand their words:

> Aunque se esforzó, no pudo entender qué decían, pero los tonos le bastaron. Fué como si tuviera una enorme barriga fofa y la clavaran en ella un palo. . . . (p.77)

The transformation of the man into a cat, which has already been suggested by his altered behaviour, is implied even more strongly by the fact that he is no longer capable of comprehending human speech. The reference to his huge, soft belly reinforces this implication. He is paralysed by fear and can do nothing to escape the threatening situation. Finally, in desperation, he opens his mouth and mews like a cat:

> Entonces abrió la boca, permaneció un instante sin saber qué buscaba con ese movimiento, y al fin maulló, agudamente, con infinita desesperación, maulló. (p.77)

In spite of the textual indications of the supernatural, the end of the story remains ambiguous. The narrator does not state that the man has been changed into a cat. Nor does he provide information that makes an irrational ending absolutely necessary. One would be justified in concluding that the protagonist's behaviour is due to insanity. The narrator withholds the information that would enable us to interpret the story unambiguously as either natural or supernatural. If he described the transformation of the protagonist's body, and not only of his personality, the conclusion would be obvious. In this case, authorial reticence makes the difference between the fantastic and magical realism. One of the factors that distinguishes stories of the fantastic from magico-realist narratives such as Kafka's "Die Verwandlung" is the absence of essential information about certain occurrences within the fictitious world.

The narrator's silence with respect to the culminating event of the story is very effective in Francisco Rojas González' "Mateo el evangelista".[19] A public scribe, who types his clients' letters on an old "Oliver", is asked by a strange man to write "No se culpe a nadie de mi muerte" (p.260). A shiver runs down the writer's back, but he makes no comment and types the message. In the following paragraph, which is also the last one, the narrator only informs us that on the day after this incident Mateo's companions decide to divide his belongings amongst themselves. The typewriter, however, does not work any longer, and the repairman tells them that the machine is so worn out that it would be useless to repair it. It is obvious from this passage that Mateo has died, but the narrator does not say so. Neither does he explain the connection between the content of the written message and the writer's own death. Was Mateo so terrified of the implications of the note that he died of fright? All we are told is that a chill ran down his back after hearing the stranger's words, and that he became extremely nervous: ". . . sus dedos siguieron tundiendo nerviosa y cruelmente las teclas" (p.260). Was the man who dictated the message able to predict somebody's death, or was he the symbolical figure of death that we find in many folk tales? The latter explanation seems to be suggested by the description of the gloomy appearance of the stranger:

> Llegó entonces hasta su mesa un individuo sombrío e impresionante. La tragedia se columpiaba en sus pestañas como púas y había en todo su porte un aire macabro. Antes de hablar, sus dedos tamborilearon sobre la sucia carpeta. Luego, casi en secreto, dictó unas palabras. (p.260)

We have no information about the stranger's identity, or the cause of the writer's death.

In Amparo Dávila's "Música concreta"[20] the narrator withholds information right from the beginning of the story in order to arouse the reader's interest. He adopts the useful technique of restricted focalization, in which he gives us the point of view of a focalizer with limited knowledge. The omniscient author hides behind the mask of a person confronted with a mystery who knows only what he hears or sees himself, so that the reader is given only as much information as the "reflector". In "Música concreta" the focalizer Sergio meets an old friend whose drastically altered appearance surprises and shocks him: ". . . no sale del asombro al comprobar que esa desaliñada y ensombrecida mujer que mira con desgano el escaparate es su amiga Marcela" (p.17). Instead of explaining her condition, Marcela gives a very vague answer, which leaves Sergio and the reader with the impression that what is upsetting her is extremely unpleasant, and that she does not want to talk about it. Her reply, "tal vez se debe a que duermo mal" (p.17), informs the reader that the real explanation of her problems is not insomnia, but something more serious. We are told no more about the case, however, while the narrator stimulates our interest to an even greater extent by emphasizing the lack of an explanation. A circumstance which is usually considered as quite normal acquires greater dimensions when our attention is drawn to the fact that nobody can account for it. The narrator singularizes the distraught appearance of Marcela by describing the disturbing effect it has on Sergio:

> "¿Qué le pasará a Marcela?", se pregunta de nuevo Sergio mientras se rasura. Piensa que tal vez ese cambio se debe al tiempo, que ya no tienen veinte años y sí están cerca de los cuarenta. Se quita la jabonadura y se contempla en el espejo con detenimiento. "No es eso, debe tener alguna cosa, algo le debe ocurrir", y le duele pensar que ha de ser algo serio, tanto que ha ocasionado un cambio tan desastroso, y él sin saber nada . . . . "A lo mejor ayer estaba desvelada o

> un poco triste sin ganas de arreglarse y no pasa nada; ella está igual que siempre y yo soy el gue está haciendo una montaña, ¡qué bueno sería que sólo fuera mi imaginación!" (pp. 18-19)

The passage is characterized by indications of uncertainty such as *qué*, *pregunta*, *piensa que tal vez*, *debe tener*, *alguna cosa*, *algo le debe ocurrir*, *ha de ser algo serio*, *sin saber nada*, *a lo mejor*. Rather than a description of Sergio's attitude, it is the expression of a void, since little information is given except that none is available. The same stylistic device is repeated later when the narrator tells us Sergio's thoughts after telephoning his friend: ". . . es indudable que algo anda mal en ella" (p.19). They decide to meet in a café, where Marcela acts strangely and alludes to her problems in a very confusing way without explaining anything:

> No sé, todo ha sido tan confuso, tan inesperado, como un sueño desastroso, una pesadilla; a veces creo que voy a despertar y que todas las cosas están intactas. (p.21)

The situation disturbing her is only referred to as *todo*, or *todas las cosas*, while Sergio continues thinking about it as *algo*: ". . . debe ser algo de Luis, algo que le duele y le cuesta trabajo decir" (p.21). Our attention is again drawn to Marcela's silence when, back in his apartment, Sergio wonders why she refuses to discuss her problem: "¿por qué no habla, por qué no cuenta lo que le pasa?" (pp. 22-23) Her reticence becomes oppressive to him: ". . . comienza a sentirse cercado por el silencio de Marcela" (p.23). When she tells him about her husband's infidelity, Sergio sees this as sufficient explanation of her state of mind, but the reader's expectations are frustrated. The creation of an atmosphere of mystery throughout the first few pages of the story suggests that an extraordinary situation will be revealed further on. If the main theme were conjugal infidelity, it would be unnecessary to create this kind of suspense. The unsatisfactory nature of the explanation is in this case only another type of authorial reticence, as the reader still feels that the mystery is left unsolved. When Marcela finally starts talking about the real cause of her problems, our understanding of the situation is only slightly improved, as she intimates more than she explains. To Sergio's question about her strange statement "también me persigue" (p.25), she only replies "Ella" (p.26), and proceeds to give a preposterous account about someone, presumably her husband's mistress, who persecutes her every night. Marcela recognizes her voice in the garden and locks doors and windows to prevent her from entering the house. When she tells Sergio that the stranger croaks constantly underneath her window ("ese croar y croar y croar toda la larga noche", p.28), and that this persecutor is a toad who is waiting to destroy her so that she can have Marcela's husband to herself, her friend discards her account as a fantasy produced by insomnia and grief. The narrator tells us neither exactly what Marcela believes, only intimating that she is convinced of the transformation of her husband's mistress into a toad, nor whether Marcela is in fact insane. He does not authenticate Sergio's opinion that the persecution is only in Marcela's imagination, but merely gives it to the reader without comment: "sufre persecuciones de la amante de Luis, las cuales él está seguro de que sólo existen en su mente" (p.31). The narrator does not tell us what he is thinking, and lets Sergio express his thoughts through free indirect discourse.

The statement that "él tiene que hacerla entender, despertarla de ese sueño absurdo y volverla a la realidad" (p.33) comes from Sergio and is not overtly mediated by the narrator. The scene in which Sergio visits the seamstress in order to persuade her to leave Marcela's husband alone is presented almost entirely by means of free indirect discourse, so that the reader is told nothing except what is in the character's mind. Sergio is disturbed by the seamstress's sneering smile and silence, and by the loud and unpleasant sounds of the radio which is playing some kind of concrete music. As the cacophony increases in intensity, the woman's appearance becomes more loathsome. It seems to Sergio that she has an enormous head with almost no neck: ". . . la cara es demasiado grande para su corta estatura, no tiene casi cuello, como si tuviera la cabeza pegada a los hombros" (p.41). He notices her "ojos saltones, fríos, inexpresivos" (p.42), and uses the same words as Marcela had done to describe the toad croaking in the garden (p.26). Finally, Sergio describes the deafening noise in the room as croaking, and notices that her body becomes inflated and clumsy. He seizes a pair of scissors and kills her, after which he telephones Marcela to inform her that the toad will not bother her anymore. The narrator gives no information about what really happened, except that Sergio threw away the scissors and cleaned his hands. We are not told explicitly that he killed her, although we can assume from the textual indications that he did. Nor did Sergio state that the seamstress was transformed into a toad, even if his description of her leads us to think that he believed that. Both Sergio and the third person narrator give us limited information, suggesting more than they tell. Although the reader may conclude that Sergio was so upset by Marcela's fantasy that he ended up believing it himself and becoming insane, the narrator gives us no indications that Sergio is anything but a normal person. On the contrary, Marcela's friend makes it obvious that he feels her story is preposterous: "Tienes que darte cuenta de lo ilógico de esta situación, no es posible que sea realidad esa loca fantasía que ha creado tu imaginación" (p.36). The reader is left confused at the end of the story because the narrator does not comment on the situation, and even Sergio describes his confrontation with the seamstress in such an expressionistic manner that we feel his anxiety more than we can actually see what happens. We are given no information which would enable us to interpret the story unambiguously.

Just as the narrator in the fantastic withholds essential information that would allow the reader to explain the mystery or logical contradiction, he refrains from giving a complete description of an apparently supernatural being. The detailed presentation of a monster characterizes supernatural horror literature, or the marvellous. The atmosphere of uncertainty that is essential to the fantastic is destroyed if the unknown or unaccepted is categorized. The supernatural can then be accepted as consistent with the fictional code which admits both natural and supernatural, it can be naturalized and considered as possible but extraordinary, or it can be seen as absurd and out of place. In Horacio Quiroga's "El almohadón de plumas",[21] the description of the monstrous animal at the end of the story naturalizes the supernatural. The mysterious ailment of the young wife is explained, and no ambiguity is left with respect to the interpretation of the story. The reaction of the characters is one of horror, but never of disbelief and uncertainty, and their acceptance of the monster's existence as well as the unemotional description that the narrator gives us prevents the reader from questioning its reality. The animal with its swollen stomach, hairy legs and slimy mouth arouses loathing, not surprise. The final justification of the monster's existence destroys the supernatural completely according to the textual code:

> Estos parásitos de las aves, diminutos en el medio habitual, llegan a adquirir en ciertas condiciones proporciones enormes. La sangre humana parece serles particularmente favorable, y no es raro hallarlos en los almohadones de pluma. (p.23)

The monster caused the wife's death by sucking her blood every night, and escaped detection by hiding in the large feather pillow. If the narrator does not emphasize the horrible appearance of the monster, descriptions of it frequently appear amusing, as in the case of Gérard de Nerval's "Le Monstre vert".[22] The policeman who drinks from a wine bottle belonging to the devil becomes the father of a little green devil with horns and a tail. No amount of effort by the doctors to bleach the skin of the child can change the hue much from its original green. It is clearly an offspring of the devil, and thus produces no anxiety and uncertainty in the parents, only chagrin at the mishap. This story is a good illustration of the lack of ambiguity that Vax mentions when he stresses the importance of uncertainty in the fantastic, which is destroyed by familiarity:

> Le motif inquiétant se dégrade en objet de plaisanterie. Imaginez quelque ménagerie fantastique où l'on puisse observer à loisir le loup-garou dans sa cage, le phénix dans sa volière et l'ondine dans un aquarium: ils étonneront un moment, comme fit la girafe

> après sa découverte, avant de prendre place parmi les curiosités naturelles.[23]

As Vax correctly points out, what we cannot see often upsets us more than what we can see:

> . . . si les ghost-seérs sont rares, les ghost-feelers sont légion. Et les fantômes qui nous voient ne sont-ils pas plus inquiétants que ceux que nous voyons?[24]

According to Vax, a monster that is seen and identified produces less fear than one that remains hidden, because we are then confronted with a known danger about which we can do something. Lovecraft, the master of horror fiction, claims that the unknown is essential to the "weird" tale, but his specifications about writing such literature apply more to the fantastic than they do to most examples of supernatural horror, in which the terrifying object or situation is described in detail:

> A certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present; and there must be a hint, expressed with a seriousness and portentousness becoming its subject, of that most terrible conception of the human brain --a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of unplumbed space.[25]

Edgar Allen Poe's "The Facts in the Case of Mr. Valdemar", which Lovecraft gives as an example of a weird tale, inspires repugnance rather than dread of the unknown, and the emphasis is more on the loathsome disintegration of the hypnotized body than on the question of whether Mesmerism exists. The "unplumbed space" soon becomes known territory, and no doubt remains in the mind of the reader that the extraordinary experiment described in the story is presented as true. The description of Mr. Valdemar's body at the end arouses disgust rather than speculation about the possibility of such an occurrence:

> As I rapidly made the mesmeric passes, amid ejaculations of "dead! dead!" absolutely bursting from the tongue and not from the lips of the sufferer, his whole frame at once —within the space of a single minute, or even less, shrunk --crumbled-- absolutely rotted away beneath my hands. Upon the bed, before that whole company, there lay a nearly liquid mass of loathsome --of detestable putridity.[26]

Unlike horror fiction, the fantastic does not present the object of horror or terror in such an unambiguous way. The "monster" is treated very much like the frightening object in Maupassant's "Sur l'eau",[27] which, although not strictly speaking fantastic because the mystery is clarified at the end, maintains the enigma throughout most of the story. The protagonist of "Sur l'eau" senses a mysterious presence as he is crossing the lake in his canoe one evening, and when he tries to weigh anchor after having rested for a while, he finds that his boat is held in place by an invisible force. He spends the night in a state of extreme anxiety until a fisherman in the morning helps him to pull up the anchor to which the corpse of an old woman is attached. The description of the narrator's terror could well belong to a fantastic tale:

> Soudain, un petit coup sonna contre mon bordage. Je fis un soubresaut, et une sueur froide me glaça des pieds à la tête. Ce bruit venait sans doute de quelque bout de bois entraîné par le courant, mais cela avait suffi et je me sentis envahi de nouveau par une étrange agitation nerveuse. (p.92)

In "Lui?",[28] the apparently supernatural object remains invisible, and the mystery is never solved. The strange presence, which the narrator is convinced haunts his home, is only referred to as "he", and the initial cause of terror —a "vision" or "hallucination" of a man sitting in an armchair but disappearing as the narrator moves closer-- is not explained. The mysterious being is neither seen nor heard after the first appearance, but the narrator knows that it is in the room:

> Il demeure invisible, cela n'empêche qu'il y soit. Il est derrière les portes, dans l'armoire fermée, sous le lit, dans tous les coins obscurs, dans toutes les ombres. (p.176)

A similar kind of invisible presence is found in "Le Horla",[29] where Maupassant describes the haunting of a man by an indefinable being, which is all the more terrifying because it cannot be seen. In this story of the fantastic, the "monster" must remain unseen, since it does not consist of flesh and blood. The narrator is only visually aware of its presence because he cannot see himself in the mirror when the Horla is there, but the being has no fixed dimensions or visible physical characteristics: "Ce qui me cachait ne paraissait point posséder de contours nettement arrêtés, mais une sorte de transparence opaque, s'éclaircissant peu à peu" (p.306). The Horla is not actually seen, but its presence is suggested by the absence of the narrator's image in the mirror. There are several instances when he knows something is there, not because he can see it, but because he notices the result of its actions. When he finds out that the water has disappeared from the carafe during the night, he is terrified at not knowing who emptied it:

> Ah! qui comprendra mon angoisse abominable? Qui comprendra l'émotion d'un homme, sain d'esprit, bien éveillé, plein de raison et qui regarde épouvanté, à travers le verre d'une carafe, un peu d'eau disparue pendant qu'il a dormi. (pp. 288-289)

On another occasion, he sees the stem of a rose being bent by an invisible agent and the flower rising up into the air. The narrator also notices the pages of a book turning by themselves and his armchair being knocked over, while the mysterious reader remains unseen.

Just how effective the technique of non-description is in the fantastic can be seen by comparing two passages of Henry James' The Turn of the Screw.[30] When the governess apparently meets the ghost of a former servant, the spectre inspires no more fear in her than if it had been a human being, since she already knows of its presence and is thus not surprised by it:

> The apparition had reached the landing halfway up and was therefore on the spot nearest the window, where at sight of me, it stopped short and fixed me exactly as it had fixed me from the tower and from the garden. He knew me as well as I knew him. . . . He was absolutely, on this occasion, a living, detestable, dangerous presence. But that was not the wonder of wonder; I reserve this distinction for quite another circumstance: the circumstance that dread had unmistakably quitted me and that there was nothing in me there that didn't meet and measure him. . . . The thing was as human and hideous as a real interview: hideous just because it was human, as human as to have met alone, in the small hours, in a sleeping house, some enemy, some adventurer, some criminal. (pp. 341-342)

When the danger has been identified, it no longer inspires so great a terror because one can search for a way in which to confront it. As Vax points out, an undetermined source of danger can often be more frightening than a known one: "Après que vous aurez identifié puis localisé le monstre, vous organiserez la chasse au vampire comme une chasse au loup."[31] The governess does not even consider the ghost of the servant Quint as a manifestation of the supernatural, and she experiences no "dread" when she meets a figure she can "measure"; on the contrary, Quint has no more effect on her than would any living human being with evil designs on her or the children she is looking after. The danger seems diminished because she can see what is threatening her. More important than the attitude of the governess is the fact that the narrator gives the reader the information to identify the figure on the staircase. Immediately after telling us that there was "someone on the stair" (p.341), he informs us that this person is Quint, and thereby leaves nothing to the reader's imagination. The opposite happens when the governess meets the ghost of Miss Jessel, who is not identified immediately. The narrator tells us that she and her young charge have an "interested spectator" (p.327) as they are playing at the side of the lake, and that she "began to take in with certitude, and yet without direct vision, the presence, at a distance, of a third person" (p.327). Instead of withholding the information about the disturbing presence in an obviously artificial manner, the narrator prolongs her reticence by claiming that she is too frightened to look directly at the figure whose presence she instinctively feels:

> There was no ambiguity in anything; none whatever, at least, in the conviction I from one moment to another found myself forming as to what I should see straight before me and across the lake as a consequence of raising my eyes. They were attached at this juncture to the stitching in which I was engaged, and I can feel once more the spasm of my effort not to move them till I should so have steadied myself as to be able to make up my mind what to do. There was an alien object in view. . . . Of the identity of the apparition I would assure myself as soon as the small clock of my courage should have ticked out the right second. . . . Then I again shifted my eyes --I faced what I had to face. (pp. 327-328)

The constant allusion to the strange figure, the refusal to say what it is, and the reluctance on the part of the governess to look at it, create an atmosphere of great suspense. The object of horror is all the more frightening because it remains unmentioned, precisely, one feels, because it is too awful to be seen or described. The vague expressions referring to the apparition --*spectator*, *a third person*, *what I should see*, *an alien object*, *apparition*, *what I had to face*-- tell us nothing about it, but convey an unidentified referent. What these terms do express is anxiety and fear of the unseen and unknown, and they tell us more about the attitude of the narrator and that expected of the implied reader than about the source of fear itself. The apparition is not identified until the next chapter, when the governess tells Mrs. Grose about "the woman in black, pale and dreadful" (p.329) whom she saw on the other side of the lake. The narrator herself is more terrified of the unseen than of what she can observe. When Mrs. Grose asks her whether she is afraid of seeing the ghost of Miss Jessel again, the governess replies: "'Oh no; that's nothing --now.' Then I explained. 'It's of *not* seeing her'" (p.330). The suspicion of what the ghost might do to the young girl without her knowledge upsets her more than the fact that she saw an apparition. A visible ghost, just like a visible menace, loses much of its effect.

Whereas in *The Turn of the Screw* the ghost remains unseen only for a while before being described, the source of horror in H. A. Murena's "El sombrero de paja"[32] is never visible to the reader. The protagonist has a vivid dream about a girl he knew in the past, and tries to reconstruct his image of her as he remembers it from reality. In the dream she has a straw hat ("un sombrero de paja con grandes alas y una ancha cinta color lila", p.29), which he notices because of its shabby condition. The emphasis on the hat makes the reader remember that detail, and prepares him for the inexplicable occurrence at the end of the story. After thinking about the girl while he is lying on the beach, the protagonist returns home and notices a straw hat with a lilac ribbon in the living room. The similarity between this hat and that of his dreams is too striking to be a coincidence, since it not only has the same shape and colour, but also small holes in the brim, just like the hat he was dreaming about. The remarkable circumstance makes him shudder, and when he sees that his aunt's room is closed, he hesitates to open it, presumably because he is afraid of what he may find there, but finally decides to find out:

> Y lo que contempló entonces hizo que se quedara clavado en el umbral de la puerta, paralizado por el horror, mientras adentro de él algo se rompió con tumulto sordo, y una especie de densa ola de sangre negra lo inundaba, le llegaba hasta los ojos, lo hacía caer desvanecido. (p.33)

Even though the reader's expectations are frustrated by not being given any indications about what caused the protagonist's reaction of horror, the extremely emotional description of the effect of an unseen menace arouses his curiosity about the unknown person or thing, and makes him look for some kind of explanation. A similar technique is used in "Lo que no vieron",[33] in which the title itself informs us of the way in which the object of terror will be presented to us. The protagonist spends the night in a reportedly haunted castle to show his friends that he does not believe the superstitious tales about it, and is not afraid. When his friends come to pick him up the next morning, they find him in bed with his eyes wide open, holding his revolver, and apparently dead with fright: "Su hermano intentó bajar aquellos párpados, velar el horror que las pupilas se obstinaban en mostrar. . ." (p.69). Since no marks of violence are to be found on his body, they conclude that some insignificant noise terrified him to the point where his heart stopped. The narrator, however, continues to give us information which the victim's friends had not known: "Pero lo que no habían visto era que. . ." (p.70). The five bullets that had been fired from his revolver were lying on the floor, pointing towards the bed, and had obviously ricocheted off a very hard object. The expression "lo que no vieron" refers to the singular position of the bullets, but in a wider context, it denotes the thing or person who had killed the man in the bed in such a strange manner. As in "El sombrero de paja", the awful object or situation is not described, only intimated by the effect it has on the protagonist. What Irene Bessière claims is a general characteristic of the fantastic is particularly applicable to these stories:

> L'improbable est l'indice d'une signification absente. Les effets émotifs sont d'autant plus marqués que la narration renvoie à une part de silence. Le récit fantastique peut alors se définir comme une technique d'évasion sémantique; le système de dénotation commande l'inachèvement narratif et l'incertitude des signes, il produit ce blanc auquel s'identifie l'improbable, parce qu'il évite de nommer un sens.[34]

According to Bessière, the fantastic consists of a narrative void ("vide narratif", p.185), and therefore renders the introduction of a monster unnecessary. She considers Lovecraft's horrors "autant de maladresses" (p.185), because they destroy the "insignification" of the text by justifying the supernatural through the evocation of a particular mythology. We may add that even in stories like Quiroga's "El almohadón de plumas", in which the monster is not a common supernatural figure such as a vampire or a werewolf, the description of it destroys the uncertainty that is essential to the fantastic.

Magical Realism

The main purpose of authorial reticence in the fantastic is to singularize an object or event in order to arouse the curiosity of the reader and to create an atmosphere of uncertainty and mystery. In magical realism, on the contrary, authorial reticence achieves exactly the opposite in that it naturalizes the supernatural and the strange world view presented in the text. An explanation of the supernatural, or an attempt to analyse the perspective that differs from our normal view of reality, would only draw our attention to the strangeness or even impossibility of certain events and beliefs. In the scene of Mackandal's execution in _El reino de este mundo_, for example, the information given by the narrator that the negro leader temporarily escaped from the pyre because the ropes broke invalidates the perspective of the negroes, who believe that he escaped by undergoing a metamorphosis. The supernatural is in this instance naturalized, and also destroyed. In a magico-realist scene such as Remedios' ascension in _Cien años de soledad_, on the contrary, the supernatural is not explained away, but simply brought down to the level of reality by being juxtaposed with a perfectly natural occurrence such as the washing blowing away on the clothes line.[35] In most examples of magical realism, it is impossible to explain the supernatural, and no attempt is made to do so. In "Axolotl", it would be preposterous to look for a logical explanation of the transformation of the protagonist into a salamander. The extraordinary reversal of time in "Viaje a la semilla" is to be considered as an ingenious type of narrative technique, and certainly not as a mysterious series of events for which an explanation must be found. In these stories, authorial reticence is necessary, because the supernatural can only be accepted as it is.

In Silvina Ocampo's "Cartas confidenciales",[36] naturalization of the supernatural is achieved not only through authorial reticence, but also by explicitly denying the strangeness of the phenomenon. The protagonist Paula writes a letter to a friend in which she recounts the extraordinary story of the mysterious appearance of an old man, Toni, who gradually becomes younger as the rest of the family advances in years. In spite of the unexplained presence of the stranger, the family soon accepts him and considers him as part of the household. Paula stresses the fact that everybody sees Toni's presence in the house as quite normal:

> Nadie en la casa se disputó el honor o el horror de haberlo encontrado, porque inmediatamente estuvieron acostumbrados a verlo, y nunca se les ocurrió que alguna vez no había estado ahí, formando parte de la familia, compartiendo sus penas y sus alegrías, sus bailes y velorios. (p.27)

This acceptance of the improbable appearance of the old man is somewhat similar to the naturalization of the supernatural in magical realism. What would be rejected in a different context is in this case integrated into the usual pattern of reality, and ceases to surprise or bewilder. The family members have grown so accustomed to Toni's presence that they do not notice his extraordinary rejuvenation: "De tanto verlo a don Toni, nadie en la casa advirtió, después de unos años, su rejuvenecimiento" (p.27). This casual introduction of a supernatural motif prevents the reader from considering it strange and contrary to the norms of conventional reality. The fact that the protagonist/narrator does not even attempt to give an explanation of the unusual phenomenon, or question how such a thing can be possible, naturalizes the supernatural to a point where we hardly see it as such. Authorial reticence in providing an explanation or expressing surprise is of great importance, as is the fact that the narrator provides no information that would suggest an alternative reaction to the supernatural. Toni's transformation must be accepted on the literal level, since there is no justification for considering it suspect. Paula's perspective is not invalidated by textual indications that would point to a realistic explanation of the supernatural, and thus create uncertainty as to how the events in the text are to be interpreted. Even the thought that the rejuvenation of the old man is strange is rejected by the members of the family with whom he lives. When a friend points out the strange phenomenon, expresses surprise, and suggests a rational explanation ("Supongo que no se hizo hacer la cirugía estética", p.28), Paula's greatgrandmother calls the changes he noticed in Toni a trivial matter: "'Cuando se vive con alguien durante tanto tiempo, esas nimiedades no se advierten'" (p.28). Nor is anyone in the family surprised at his increasingly youthful behaviour. The only reaction at his becoming an architecture student is one of mirth: "No faltó quien se riera de él por haber empezado tan tarde el estudio de una ciencia tan difícil" (p.29). This lack of surprise can be partially explained by the fact that people do not realize what is actually occurring, and attribute Toni's strange decisions to natural causes. Very few details are given about the process of rejuvenation in Toni, and the narrator often just implies what is happening by describing his activities. The fact that the narrator does not dwell on the physical changes in the old man, and merely gives us the essential information in a matter-of-fact way, makes the transformation appear very natural. A great amount of detail would only "singularize" the process and draw our attention to the strange phenomenon. The narrator thus gives only a brief account of the supernatural changes, which she then immediately dismisses in order to describe his lifestyle as if it were that of any normal human being. We are told that Toni becomes engaged, takes an active interest in sports, reaches puberty, adolescence and infancy, and finally disappears when the narrator/protagonist gives birth. The reactions of surprise on the part of outsiders are described without comment or implicit confirmation by Paula: "Mucha gente sospechaba que don Toni se teñía el pelo, pero otros decían que el pelo había vuelto a su color natural, debido a las ilusiones de amor que habían despertado en él, gracias a la novia" (p.30). The narrator herself does not try to find any explanation of these events, which she considers natural: "Me pareció natural, tan natural que no se lo conté a nadie; o bien me pareció tan sobrenatural, que no se lo conté a nadie" (p.33). Her reactions are similar to those of the reader, who finds the events so preposterous that he does not even question their veracity, but merely accepts them. Prilidiana, to whom Paula's letter is addressed, considers the whole story absurd:

> Leí tu carta ¡como si me hablaras en chino! Y pensar que somos tan amigas. Te complicás por nada, eso es lo que a mí me parece. . . . No tiene ni pies ni cabeza. Por más que me rasgue la rodilla, no entiendo ni palote, y lo peor de todo es que me da miedo. Si a los hombres les diera por vivir como a don Toni, para atrás ¿qué pasaría? (pp. 33,35)

But she can offer no satisfactory explanation of Paula's account, and does not even consider her story seriously. Her reaction does not disprove her friend's claims, since she provides no contradicting facts.

On the contrary, her letter reinforces our reactions to the rest of the story, because she gives no reasons for disbelieving Paula. She does not point out that a reversal of the aging process is logically impossible, and rejects the account simply because she cannot understand it. At the end of the letter, she even concedes that such a thing might happen: "¿Sería posible, vieja, que esto pasara?" (p.35). Since "Cartas confidenciales" is composed of only two letters, and the implied author gives us no information as to which one should be believed, the reader has no basis on which to question the validity of either account. The author hides behind two different masks, and refrains from either authenticating or denying the stories of the two narrators. Authorial reticence leaves the reader no option but to accept the two conflicting perspectives.

In Silvina Ocampo's "Las vestiduras peligrosas"[37] we are given the perspective of only one narrator, who is dramatized in the story. The seamstress Piluca is asked on several occasions to sew revealing dresses for Artemia, who wears them in public to the consternation of her dress-maker friend. On the morning after the first time she goes out in one of them, she reads in the newspaper that a girl in Budapest who was wearing exactly the same dress as Artemia was assaulted by a gang of youths. Neither Artemia nor her seamstress shows any surprise at the extraordinary coincidence, and the only reaction on the part of Artemia is one of pity and shock at the tragic incident. She does not even consider the fact that the girl in Budapest was wearing a dress identical to hers as a coincidence, but simply sees the two dresses as being one: "'Comprenda que es mi jumper el que llevaba esa mujer. El jumper que yo dibujé, el que me quedaba bien a mí'" (p.49). Piluca, the narrator, does not understand why Artemia would even be upset at such an occurrence. No explanation is given of the apparently supernatural coincidence, and no circumstances are described which may suggest a rational solution. The narrator does not even admit that the incident was strange in any way. When Artemia goes out a second time in a provocative dress, another woman, this time in Tokyo, is assaulted because of the clothes she is wearing. Artemia believes that there is a simple connection between the identical dresses in different parts of the world, and does not question how this could be possible: "'No puedo hacer nada en el mundo sin que otras mujeres me copien'" (p.50). When a similar event occurs for the third time, the narrator is again only concerned about the evil in the world: "Me dió pena y horror la perversidad del mundo" (p.51). Finally, Artemia herself is killed in the streets, even though she is decently dressed. The supernatural in this story is naturalized by a narrator who shows no surprise at its existence, and in fact does not even consider it as out of the ordinary. Since it is accepted by the narrator and characters, and no alternate explanation is given of the extraordinary connection between Artemia's designs and the attacks on women in different parts of the world, the reader can only accept the supernatural. As the narrator refrains from commenting on the inexplicable, the reader is not led to question it either.

In some magico-realist narratives the perspective of the protagonist, in which the natural and supernatural is considered to be on the same level of reality, can be explained in a rational manner, as the information given in the story does not contradict a logical solution. However, the reader accepts the strange point of view of the narrator because there are no textual indications to distance him from that perspective. If the narrator explicitly introduced a series of events by informing us that they are merely the product of someone's diseased imagination, and therefore not to be believed literally, the reader would react to the story as he would to the account of a hallucination, a dream, or insane fantasies. In this instance, the factual authenticity of the occurrences in the fictional world would be destroyed, and we would be in the presence of the oneiric or the hallucinatory. If the narrator, however, presents the story without any comment about its lack of veracity, the reader is not justified in reacting to the narrated events with scepticism. In the absence of any indications to the contrary, the reader accepts the story on the literal level. It is then not only the type of focalization, but also authorial reticence in regard to the adopted perspective, that characterizes magical realism. Frequently, the distinction between an oneiric and a magico-realist story can be made on the basis of authorial intrusion.

In "Carta a una señorita en París", the incredible account of the vomiting of rabbits could well be attributed to the insanity of the protagonist, who sustains one long hallucination. Since we have only one version of what actually happened in the apartment in Buenos Aires, and no meta-diegetic narrator gives us any information that would contradict the contents of the protagonist's letter to his friend in Paris, the reader must accept them primarily on the literal level. The implied author limits his point of view to that of the main focalizer, and does not give the opinions or reactions of any other character. A story which is on the borderline between magical realism and the account of a hallucination is Cortázar's "Las puertas del cielo",[38] in which the consistent focalization of a supernatural event is maintained throughout part of the narrative, only to be contradicted briefly at the end. After Mauro's wife Celina dies, he and his friend Marcelo (who is also the narrator) spend the evening at a night club. As they watch the couples dancing, Marcelo suddenly notices the figure of Celina amongst the other dancers. She is described by the narrator as if she were simply another woman, whose presence does not surprise anyone:

> . . . otra vez los bailarines se inmovilizaban (siempre moviéndose) y Celina que estaba sobre la derecha, saliendo del humo y girando obediente a la presión de su compañero, quedó un momento de perfil a mí, después de espaldas, el otro perfil, y alzó la cara para oír la música. Yo digo: Celina; pero entonces fue más bien saber sin comprender, Celina ahí sin estar, claro cómo comprender eso en el momento. (p.136)

Although Marcelo and Mauro tremble with emotion, they are not afraid of the apparition: "eso estaba más cerca del espanto y la alegría y el estómago" (p.136). The narrator does not remind us of the fact that Celina is dead, and neither of the two men reacts to the figure in the way that a victim of a ghost story would. They continue watching Celina as she dances the tango with an expression of utmost happiness. The only indication that she is dead is given by the narrator when he remarks that she has at last found her paradise, in which no worry or responsibility constrains her. But even this comment could refer to a real person, who forgets her problems on the dance floor. When they mention her appearance to each other, they comment only on how she looks, and not on the strange phenomenon of her being there in the first place. Finally, the narrator destroys his own illusion by admitting that the woman they saw only resembles Celina, and he watches Mauro as he goes up to talk to her: "Lo vi levantarse y caminar por la pista con paso de borracho, buscando a la mujer que se parecía a Celina" (p.137). Even though the presentation of the dancing woman as Celina is not maintained throughout the whole story, the scene in which the narrator describes the apparently supernatural apparition is a good example of magical realism.

Sometimes the world view in a magico-realist narrative is so alien to the reader that the author must intrude in order to enable him to understand it. This often happens when the perspective is that of a different race or ethnic group of which most readers have little knowledge. The narrator in this case only explains what the focalizers believe, to the point where the reader can integrate the narrated events within a particular code. He does not tell us how the supernatural is possible, as in some occultist writings, or explain it by natural causes, so that the events are considered as the product of dreams or hallucinations. He gives only enough information for the reader to adopt the perspective of the unusual focalizer. This happens in Asturias' Hombres de maíz, where a secondary character sometimes assumes the function of elucidating the world view of the Guatemalan Indians. Without this intervention, the novel would be quite confusing to most readers. Since the implied reader is not familiar with the beliefs of the characters depicted in the novel, he must be told about their superstitions and legends. In the chapter entitled "Correo-coyote", the narrator describes an episode in the life of Nicho Aquino, a courier who is transformed into a coyote when he leaves the village in order to carry the mail faster. According to the beliefs of the Guatemalan Indians, everybody has a nahual, or animal that protects him. In some cases, he can be metamorphosed into that animal, or suffer physically when it is injured. The curandero in Chapter 3, for example, dies when his nahual, a deer (Venado de las Siete-rozas), is shot. In the section on Nicho Aquino, we are given an explanation of this kind of metamorphosis, not by the primary narrator, who usually adopts the point of view of the indigenous population, but by a priest who cannot accept the idea of nahualism. The idea that a man has a protective animal does not seem as preposterous to him as the actual transformation of a man into his nahual, because it is similar to the concept of the guardian angel in his own religion. The priest's elucidation of nahualism functions as a meta-text, which is a commentary on the primary text, and necessary for its comprehension. While it does not advance the plot in any way, it is an essential part of the text if the information given is not self-explanatory:

> Apartó la almáciga de notas para tomar su breviario. El nahualismo. Todo el mundo habla del nahualismo y nadie sabe lo que es. Tiene su nahual, dicen de cualquier persona, significando que tiene un animal que le protege. Esto se entiende, porque así como los cristianos tenemos el santo ángel de la guarda, el indio cree tener su nahual. Lo que no se explica, sin la ayuda del demonio, es que el indio pueda convertirse en el animal que le protege, que sirve de nahual. Sin ir muy lejos, este Nichón dicen que se vuelve coyote, al salir del pueblo, por allí por los montes, llevando la correspondencia, y por eso, cuando él va con el correo, parece que las cartas volaran, tal llegan de presto a su destino.[39]

What distinguishes this type of authorial intrusion from that in El reino de este mundo is that it does not invalidate the information given in the rest of the novel. In Carpentier's book, the logical explanation of Mackandal's temporary escape from the pyre renders the negroes' point of view unconvincing. While it too is a meta-text guiding the reader's reactions to the rest of the narrative, it negates the perspective that had been established previously. In Asturias' novel, on the contrary, the priest's explanation of nahualism corroborates the beliefs of the Indians as well as making them more accessible to the reader. The priest does not deny the existence of protective animals and man's transformation into them, but simply admits that he does not understand it. Although he obviously cannot accept nahualism, which he expresses by saying that the Indian "believes" he has a nahual and that people "claim" that Nicho Aquino becomes a coyote, he does not reject the possibility of such a thing. We see here that authorial reticence is maintained up to a certain point, since the implied author, who has been educated to make the distinction between the natural and the supernatural, refrains from commenting on the absurdity of nahualism to the conventional Western way of thinking. Even when he intrudes to explain strange concepts, he adopts the mask of a character in the text who does not share the world view of the primary focalizer.

Apart from this short explanatory paragraph in the words of the priest, the author presents nahualism without any comment. In one instance he uses free indirect discourse to inform us that Hilario sees Nicho Aquino metamorphosed into a coyote as he looks for him in the mountains:

> ¿Sería o no sería coyote? Cómo dudar que era coyote si lo vio bien. Allí estaba la duda, en que lo vio bien y vio que no era coyote, porque al verlo tuvo la impresión de que era gente y gente conocida. Se chupó una muela viejo con todo y el pellejo del carrillo. Se me ríen en la cara, si les cuento que llegué muy a tiempo a la Cumbre de María Tecún, que alcancé a ver al correo Aquino en forma de coyote, aullando. . . . (p.685)

Later on in the chapter, the narrator again adopts the focalization of

Hilario, who is afraid to tell anybody about seeing Nicho Aquino, because divulging that information may bring him bad luck. This time he does not express the courier's thoughts by free indirect discourse, but describes his apprehensions by conventional third person narration, in which the mind of a character is focalized by a non-dramatized narrator using his own words. If the narrator adopts the point of view of that character, and gives us no information that contradicts it, it frequently appears more authentic and reliable, as in the following passage:

> Pero, Hilario sólo escuchó, sin contestarle y a nadie dijo nada, ni a la Adela Cuevas, por el temor de que si descubría que en la Cumbre de María Tecún topó al señor Nicho convertido en su nahual, la fuera a pasar algo grave, le acarreara mala suerte: era tan sagrado, tan de íntima amistad el vínculo que entre ellos estableció el furtivo encuentro, que revelarlo acarrearía desgracia, porque era romper el misterio, violar la naturaleza secreta de ciertas relaciones profundas y lejanas. (p.744)

Finally, the narrator describes Nicho Aquino in his animal form without the mediation of any dramatized focalizer. When the courier is accompanied by the sorcerer Venado de las Siete-rozas to the Underworld, he goes as a coyote, "con sus dientes de mazorca de maíz blanco, su alargado cuerpo de serrucho" and his "quemantes ojos de fuego líquido" (p.756). No explanation is given of how he was transformed, or how his companion turned into a deer. The scene is presented to the reader as if no clarification were necessary, and he accepts it without questioning. Only the reason for their journey is given: they go to the Underworld in order to meet their nahual after a series of ordeals and ceremonies.

Authorial reticence has a less complex function in magical realism than in the fantastic, where it creates suspense, uncertainty, and greater reader participation and acceptance of the contradictions in the text. In magical realism, it serves the purpose mainly of preventing the reader from questioning the narrated events, as no attention is drawn to the strangeness of the world view. The unnatural is naturalized by commenting as little as possible on it, and reducing the distance between the narrator and the situation he is describing. This use of authorial reticence to eliminate distance is quite different from that in the fantastic, where the narrator stresses the singularity of the events and the fact that he cannot integrate the supernatural within his conventional perception of reality, while at the same time withholding certain details in order to arouse the reader's interest.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters, we have discussed the three characteristics we consider essential to the fantastic and magical realism —the presence of the natural and the supernatural, the emphasis on antinomy and its resolution in the fictitious world, and authorial reticence. Our understanding of these two modes would be enhanced still further, however, if we examined some additional characteristics. We have already mentioned, for example, that the narrator in the fantastic must be reliable in order for the desired effect on the reader to be produced. If someone shares our conventional perception of reality, we are more inclined to accept his testimony than if his world view differs from our own. Todorov stresses the importance of the narrator's character:

> En outre, pour faciliter l'identification, le narrateur sera un "homme moyen", en qui tout (ou presque) lecteur peut se reconnaître. Ainsi pénètre-t-on de la manière la plus directe possible dans l'univers fantastique.[1]

We do not doubt the observations of the narrator, but try to find, just as he does, a rational solution to an apparently inexplicable problem. As Caillois correctly points out, the most successful fantastic narratives were written by masters of nineteenth century realism, because the narrator was usually "exact, scrupuleux, réaliste".[2] If the narrator believes in logic and reason, an event which seems to contradict these norms is particularly disquieting, because we trust his judgment:

> C'est qu'il convient d'abord d'accumuler les preuves circonstancielles de la véracité du récit invraisemblable. Toile de fond nécessaire à l'irruption de l'événement effarant, dont le héros sera le premier épouvanté. Son scepticisme humilié cède devant la manifestation irrecusable. (p.22)

The narrator must be reliable if the reader is to identify with him, and identification is considered by several critics as a necessary condition for the existence of the fantastic. André Targe, for example, calls it "l'une des premières conditions du récit fantastique et la garantie de son efficacité."[3] In most examples of the fantastic, the narrator maintains a certain distance with regard to the disconcerting events he is describing. Although disturbed by the situation, he still tries to rationalize the inexplicable. The fact that he retains his identity as a rational being, in spite of the presence of an apparently supernatural situation, gives the story a greater degree of "authentification".[4] Bellemin-Noël calls this type of narrator a relais, who presents the supernatural from the perspective of reason: "Le récit est ainsi toujours médiatisé, dans la simultanéité ou dans la durée, de sorte que sa résonance participe à la fois du 'surnaturel' et du 'rationnel'."[5]

In magical realism, both reader identification and the reliability of the narrator acquire different dimensions. Obviously, a narrator who adopts the point of view of superstitious cultural groups or hallucinating individuals is not considered reliable in the same way as the narrator of a traditional fantastic story, such as "La Vénus d'Ille", who believes in the exclusive validity of natural causes.

The magico-realist narrator is not seen as reliable in presenting our conventional world view, but he does appear to give an accurate portrayal of a different mentality. Whether his perception of an unusual perspective of reality conforms to a certain Weltanschauung in objective reality is not as important as the conformity of the narrator in a fantastic story to our standards of thinking, but the world view he portrays must have consistency and verisimilitude within the fictitious world. A narrator who describes his world ironically destroys the validity of the characters' perspectives. Since the magico-realist narrator adopts a point of view that differs from our own, we cannot identify with him to the same extent as in the fantastic. While the reader accepts the unconventional world view, he does so only within the context of the fictitious world, and does not integrate it in his own perception of reality. Even if the perspective of the fictitious characters corresponds, as in the case of Asturias, to his interpretation of beliefs actually held by a particular cultural group, the reader considers the represented world as alien. The impossibility of complete reader identification in the case of a magico-realist work about American Indians is stressed by critics such as Dieter Janik, and would provide an interesting topic for further discussion:

> Die Lektüre indigenistischer Werke fordert vom europäischen Leser einen Absprung von seinen gewohnten Vorstellungen, ohne dass er jedoch durch die Darstellung der indigenen Verhaltensweisen und der sie tragenden Anschauungen und Wertsetzungen ihr Weltverhältnis und ihre Lebensauffassung wirklich nachvollziehen könnte. Selbst wenn eine Autorin wie Rosario Castellanos durch die gewählte Erzählperspektive den Leser in die Innenwelt indianischen Vorstellens,indianischer "Brujería" einzubeziehen trachtet, bleibt eine nicht zu überwindende Kluft bestehen.[6]

In spite of Asturias' ability to create a coherent world view, which is lacking in most of the authors discussed by Janik, the reader of Hombrés de maíz cannot easily identify with the Indian focalizers, but must endeavour to suspend his own view of reality and imagine that of another, on the basis of information given in the text.

Another area that could be explored in more detail is the subjectivity of the narrator and the characteristics of enunciation in both modes. The magistrate in "La Main", for example, emphasizes that he believes only in natural causes, but a closer study of textual indications reveals that he is disconcerted by the possibility of a supernatural occurrence. The identity of the narrator in this case is always ambiguous, although in a different way from that of a magico-realist narrator. The latter reveals his erudition and Western beliefs, while at the same time portraying and accepting a completely different point of view. An analysis of the contradictions between the mode of representation and the represented world in magical realism should therefore be undertaken. Finally, the structure of the fantastic should be examined more closely. Suspense, the gradual introduction of the supernatural in a realistic setting, the effect of an unexpected ending, and the suggestion of various explanations of an event, are all relevant areas of investigation. Before embarking on an analysis of the additional areas, however, it is necessary to establish a practical definition of magical realism and the fantastic that does not impose exaggerated limitations and is not so vague that it applies to an unwieldy and heterogeneous body of literature. By examining the essential characteristics of the two modes, we have endeavoured to suggest a possible definition that avoids these pitfalls and provides a basis for further study which could effectively culminate in a more adequately comprehensive description of the texts we have considered.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

[1] *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 113-114.

[2] Ed. Nicolás Cócaro, Primera serie (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1960).

[3] *L'Imaginaire au pouvoir: Les enfants et la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Editions Ouvrières, 1977), p.26.

[4] "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction", *Hispania*, 38, No. 2 (May 1955), pp.187-192.

[5] "El realismo mágico en la literatura hispanoamericana", *Cuadernos americanos*, 153, No. 4 (July-Aug. 1967), pp.232-233.

[6] "Realismo mágico versus literatura fantástica: un diálogo de sordos", *Otros mundos otros fuegos; fantasía y realismo mágico en Iberoamérica* (Memoria del XVI Congreso Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana), ed. Donald B. Yates (Michigan State University: Latin American Studies Center, 1975), p.33. To avoid the unnecessary proliferation of notes, additional references to the same source that immediately follow an initial citation are included in parentheses in our text.

[7] *Otros mundos otros fuegos*, p.59.

[8] Roland Barthes, "Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits", *Poétique du récit* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1977), p.9.

CHAPTER ONE

[1] "Ensayo de una tipología de la literatura fantástica", *Revista Iberoamericana*, 38 (July-Sept. 1972), p.391.

[2] Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970), p.47.

[3] *Teoría de lo fantástico* (Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 1976), p.13.

[4] Jean Bellemin-Noël, "Notes sur le fantastique (textes de Théophile Gautier)", *Littérature*, 8 (Dec. 1972), p.7.

[5] *Les Chefs-d'oeuvre de la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979), p.34.

[6] Presses Universitaires de France, 1965, p.72.

[7] "*La Invención de Morel*: Lectura y Lectores", *Revista Iberoamericana*, 42 (1976), p.485.

[8] Jean-Baptiste Baronian, *La France fantastique de Balzac à Louÿs* (Verviers, Belgium: Editions Gérard, 1973), p.10.

[9] Ulrich Wicks, "The Nature of Picaresque Narrative: A Modal Approach", *PMLA*, 89, No. 2 (Mar. 1974), pp.240-249. See also: Robert Scholes, "Towards a Poetics of Fiction: An Approach through Genre", *Novel*, 2 (1969), pp.101-111.

[10] "The Nature of Picaresque Narrative", p.42.

[11] Eric S. Rabkin, *The Fantastic in Literature* (Princeton: University Press, 1976); Baronian, *La France fantastique*; Enrique Anderson Imbert, *El realismo mágico y otros ensayos* (Caracas: Monte Avila Editores, 1976).

[12] *Anthologie du fantastique*, (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1966), Vol. 1, p.8.

[13] *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, p.47.

[14] *Imago*, 5 (1919).

[15] *Anthologie du fantastique*, Vol. 1, p.9.

[16] "Struktur und Definition der phantastischen Literatur", *Wirkendes Wort*, 28, No. 5 (1978), p.342.

[17] "Notes sur le fantastique", p.15.

[18] *Volksmärchen und Volkssage* (Bern and München: Francke Verlag, p.1961), p.27.

[19] *La Séduction de l'étrange*, p.69.

[20] "Struktur und Definition", p.345.

[21] "Notes sur le fantastique", p.4.

[22] *Les Chefs-d'oeuvre du fantastique*, p.115.

[23] *L'Art et la littérature fantastiques* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970), p.6.

[24] *The Short Fiction of Edgar Allan Poe*, Ed. Stuart and Susan Levine, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1977), p.464.

[25] *La Séduction de l'étrange*, p.244.

[26] *The Fantastic in Literature*, p.8.

[27] *The Fantastic in Literature*, p.41.

[28] *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, p.29.

[29] *Le Récit fantastique: la poétique de l'incertain* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1974), p.31.

[30] *Teoría de lo fantástico*, p.86.

[31] "Notes sur le fantastique", p.4.

[32] *La Séduction de l'étrange*, p.160.

[33] *Les Chefs-d'oeuvre du fantastique*, p.160.

[34] *La Séduction de l'étrange*, p.61.

[35] Bellemin-Noël, "Notes sur le fantastique", p.20.

[36] *Le Récit fantastique*, p.34.

[37] *La Séduction de l'étrange*, p.29.

[38] *Le Récit fantastique*, pp.36-38.

[39] Caillois, *Anthologie du fantastique*, Vol. 1, p.13.

[40] Vax, *L'Art et la littérature fantastiques*, p.17.

[41] "Isla a su vuelo fugitiva: Carpentier y el realismo mágico", *Revista iberoamericana*, 40, No. 86 (Jan.-March, 1974), pp.19-22.

[42] For a discussion of the concept of magical realism according to Franz Roh, and of its relation to the Spanish American literary mode, see Luis Leal, "El realismo mágico en la literatura hispanoamericana", *Cuadernos americanos*, 153, No. 4 (July-Aug.,1967); Lorraine Elena Ben-Ur, "El realismo mágico en la crítica hispanoamericana", *Journal of Spanish Studies Twentieth Century*, 4, No. 3 (Winter, 1976); Emir Rodríguez Monegal, "Realismo mágico versus literatura fantástica: un diálogo de sordos".

[43] Roberto González Echevarría, "Isla a su vuelo fugitiva", pp.22-23.

[44] Lucila-Inés Mena, "Hacia una formulación teórica del realismo mágico", *Bulletin hispanique*, 77, Nos. 3-4 (July-Dec., 1975), p.395.

[45] "Realismo mágico: notas sobre su génesis y naturaleza en Alejo Carpentier", *Nueva narrativa hispanoamericana*, 3, No. 2, (Sept. 1973), p.257.

[46] "Isla a su vuelo fugitiva", p.19.

[47] "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction", p.189.

[48] *El cuento hispanoamericano: antología crítico-histórica*, (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1964), Vol. 2, p.115.

[49] *Magical Realism and the Literary World of Miguel Angel Asturias* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965), p.17.

[50] "The Ideal World in Search of its Reference: An Inquiry into the Underlying Nature of Magical Realism", *Chasqui*, 4, No. 2, (Feb. 1975), p.11.

[51] "Hacia una formulación teórica", p.407.

[52] Enrique Anderson Imbert, *El realismo mágico y otros ensayos* (Caracas: Monte Avila Editores, 1976), p.24.

[53] "Magical Realism", p.192.

[54] A. Valbueno Briones, "Una cala en el realismo mágico", *Cuadernos americanos*, 166, No. 5, (Sept. - Oct. 1969), p.236.

[55] "Magical Realism", p.188.

[56] Anni Carlsson, Teufel, Tod und Tiermensch: *Phantastischer Realismus als Geschichtsschreibung der Epoche* (Kronbert: Athenäum Verlag, 1978), pp.19-24.

[57] See Alejo Carpentier, "Prólogo", *El reino de este mundo* (Mexico: Compañía General de Ediciones, 1967), pp.8-9, 12.

[58] Hans-Joachim Müller, "Zu den Beziehungen des magischen Realismus der neueren lateinamerikanischen Literatur mit dem französischen Surrealismus", *Sprachkunst*, 10 (Aug. 1979), p.120.

[59] "El realismo mágico en los cuentos de Uslar Pietri", *Cuadernos Americanos*, 204, No. 1, (1976), p.210.

[60] "Isla a su vuelo fugitiva", p.38.

[61] For further discussion of this concept, see Juan Barroso, *"Realismo mágico" y "lo real maravilloso" en El reino de este mundo y El siglo de las luces* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1977).

[62] "Isla a su vuelo fugitiva", p.39.

[63] "Magical Realism", p.191.

[64] "Realismo Mágico: algunas consideraciones formales sobre su concepto", *Otros mundos otros fuegos*, p.54.

[65] Emil Volek, "Alejo Carpentier y la narrativa latinoamericana actual (dimensiones de un 'realismo mágico')", *Cuadernos hispanoamericanos*, 296 (Feb. 1975), p.327.

[66] "Isla a su vuelo fugitiva", pp.26-27.

[67] Carpentier, "Prólogo", *El reino de este mundo*, p.11.

[68] *Otros mundos otros fuegos*, p.34.

[69] "El realismo mágico", p.233.

[70] "Hacia una formulación teórica", p.401.

[71] "El realismo mágico", p.159.

[72] "Isla a su vuelo fugitiva", pp.24-25.

[73] "Magical Realism", p.190.

[74] *El realismo mágico y otros ensayos*, p.10.

[75] "'Literatura fantástica', 'realismo mágico' y 'lo real maravilloso'", *Otros mundos otros fuegos*, p.42.

[76] "El realismo mágico", p.232.

CHAPTER TWO

[1] München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1972.

[2] *Studies in Semiotics: The Evaluation of Literary Texts* (Lisse: The Peter de Ridder Press, 1978), p.51.

[3] *Der Akt des Lesens* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1976), p.52.

[4] Ingarden uses the term *Unbestimmtheitsstellen*. *Das literarische Kunstwerk* (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1960), p.261.

[5] *Der Akt des Lesens*, p.28.

[6] Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1972, pp.206-211.

[7] *Poétique*, 29, No. 1 (1977), p.113.

[8] Paris: Editions Gallimard.

[9] *Los pasos perdidos* (Caracas: R. Mus editor, 1953), p.202.

[10] *Cien años de soledad* (Barcelona: Editorial Argos Vergara, 1975).

[11] "Acabó de decirlo, cuando Fernanda sintió que un delicado viento de luz le arrancó las sábanas de las manos y las desplegó con toda su amplitud. Amaranta sintió un temblor misterioso en los encajes de sus pollerinas y trató de agarrarse de la sábana para no caer, en el instante en que Remedios, la bella, empezaba a elevarse. Ursula, ya casi ciega, fue la única que tuvo serenidad para identificar

la naturaleza de aquel viento irreparable, y dejó las sábanas a merced de la luz, viendo a Remedios, la bella, que le decía adios con la mano, entre el deslumbrante aleteo de las sábanas que subían con ella, que abandonaban con ella el aire de los escarabajos y las dalias, y pasaban con ella a través del aire donde terminaban las cuatro de la tarde, y se perdieron con ella para siempre en los altos aires dondo no podían alcanzarla ni los más altos pájaros de la memoria." Pp.192-193.

[12] *Diálogo con Latinoamérica* (Barcelona: Editorial Pomaire, 1972), pp.265-266.

[13] Mexico: Compañía General de Ediciones, 1967.

[14] Notwithstanding our discussion of magical realism in *El reino de este mundo*, we must add the clarification that Carpentier's novel is an example of *lo real maravilloso*, or the description of the New World as marvellous. The shifts in focalization can be justified by the implied author's belief that the New World is marvellous because it incorporates several completely different world views, such as the rational Western mentality, and the "magical" world view of the Haitian negroes. Carpentier does not adopt the point of view of a single focalizer, as is usually the case in magical realism, but gives us a variety of perspectives. For further discussion of *lo real maravilloso*, see Roberto González Echevarría's "Isla a su vuelo fugitiva", and Juan Barroso's *"Realismo Magico" y "Lo Real Maravilloso" en El reino de este mundo y El siglo de las luces*.

[15] *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p.140.

[16] By "contract" we mean the agreement which the reader enters into with the author, whereby he accepts the fictitious world as presented by the narrator, and interprets events within the narrative according to the norms of that particular text.

[17] Asturias, *Obras completas* (Madrid: Editorial Aguilar, 1969), Vol. 1.

[18] "*Hombres de maíz*: el mito como tiempo y palabra", in *Homenaje a Miguel Angel Asturias*, ed. Helmy F. Giacoman (New York: Las Américas Publishing Company, 1971), p.238.

[19] *Bestiario* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Yerba Buena, 1946), pp.3-8.

[20] The concept of "hierarchy of meaning" refers to the presence of various levels of meaning in the text. These are not mutually exclusive, nor is one level of meaning necessarily more important than another. The term "hierarchy" merely implies that one level is more obvious than another, and must be analysed before the others can be fully understood.

[21] _Las pruebas del caos_ (Buenos Aires: Editorial Yerba Buena, 1946), pp.3-8.

[22] All focalization is restricted, since even an omniscient author must, for practical and aesthetic reasons, limit the amount of information he gives about the fictitious world. But some types of focalization are more restricted than others, in that the reader is only given a description of the external appearance of a character, and not an explanation of his motives or thoughts.

[23] _La locura juega al ajedrez_ (Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores, 1971), pp.184-186.

[24] _Gesammelte Werke_ (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1976), Vol. 4, p.57.

[25] _Historias fantásticas_ (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1976), pp.7-22.

[26] _Historias fantásticas_, pp.213-235.

[27] _Historias fantásticas_, pp.151-162.

[28] _Historias fantásticas_, pp.23-53.

[29] _Historias fantásticas_, pp.112-150.

[30] _Bestiario_, pp.139-165.

[31] _Bestiario_, pp.51-67.

[32] Jacques Cazotte (Paris: Editions Nilsson, s.d.).

[33] *Romans et Nouvelles*, ed. M. Parturier (Paris: Editions Garnier, 1967), Vol. 2, pp.87-118.

[34] *La locura juega al ajedrez*, pp.18-32.

[35] For further discussion of this concept, see Vax, *La Séduction de l'étrange*.

[36] *Cuentos fantásticos argentinos*, Primera serie, pp.149-156.

[37] *Todos los fuegos el fuego* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1977), pp.117-127.

[38] *Cuentos fantásticos argentinos*, Segunda serie, ed. Nicolás Cócaro and Antonio E. Serrano Redonnet (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1976), pp.163-187.

[39] This concept was developed by Roland Barthes in "L'effet de réel", *Communications*, 11 (1968), pp.84-89.

[40] *Cuentos fantásticos argentinos*, Segunda serie, pp.209-220.

[41] *La sandía y otros cuentos* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Galerna, 1969), pp.127-128.

[42] *Figures II* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1969), p.97.

CHAPTER THREE

[1] *Contes fantastiques complets* (Verviers, Belgium: Bibliothèque Marabout, 1976), pp.177-184.

[2] *La locura juega al ajedrez*, pp.2-17.

[3] *Anthologie du Fantastique*, Vol. 1, p.8.

[4] *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, p.63.

[5] "Notes sur le fantastique", pp.20-22.

[6] *Los días enmascarados* (Mexico: Editorial Los Presentes, 1954), pp.7-28.

[7] *Cuentos fantásticos argentinos*, Segunda serie, pp.121-141.

[8] *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, p.29.

[9] Todorov, *Théorie de la littérature: Textes des Formalistes russes* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1965), p.310.

[10] *Théorie de la littérature*, p.288.

[11] *The Metamorphoses*, trans. Horace Gregory (New York: New American Library, 1960), p.281.

[12] *Théorie de la littérature*, p.284.

[13] *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), pp.286 and 285 respectively.

[14] *Final del juego* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1978), pp.157-167.

[15] In this case, *méta-récit* refers to a secondary narrative sequence which is subordinated to the main plot.

[16] *Cuentos fantásticos argentinos*, Primera serie, pp.69-75.

[17] *Cuentos fantásticos argentinos*, Primera serie, pp.157-163.

[18] *Bestiario*, pp.35-49.

[19] *The Double*, trans. George Bird (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1968), p.74.

[20] Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1970.

21 *Final del juego*, pp.149-155.

22 *Guerra del tiempo* (Barcelona: Seix Barral Editores, 1975), pp.55-81.

23 *Final del juego*, pp.9-10.

24 "La actitud lúdica en un cuento de Cortázar", *Explicación de textos literarios*, 5, No. 2, (1976), p.171.

25 "La actitud lúdica", p.165.

CHAPTER FOUR

1 *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, p.20.

2 Todorov, *Théorie de la littérature*, p.83.

3 *Contes fantastiques complets* (Verviers, Belgium: Bibliothèque Marabout, 1976), pp.271-280.

4 *Les chefs-d'oeuvre de la littérature fantastique*, p.159.

5 *Historias fantásticas*, pp.7-22.

6 *Historias fantásticas*, pp.3-53.

7 *Das Schreckliche in Schauerromantik und Detektivgeschichte* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1974), p.5.

8 *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, p.157.

9 *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, p.60.

10 *Historias fantásticas*, pp.112-150.

11 *Les chefs-d'oeuvre de la littérature fantastique*, p.21.

[12] *Romans et nouvelles*, p.118.

[13] *Música concreta* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1964), pp.130-148.

[14] *Los días enmascarados*, p.21.

[15] *Contes fantastiques complets*, p.183.

[16] *Cuentos fantásticos argentinos*, Primera serie, pp.41-45.

[17] *Das Schreckliche*, p.54.

[18] *El centro del infierno* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sur, 1954), pp.73-77.

[19] *Cuentos completos* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1971), pp.256-261.

[20] *Música concreta*, pp.17-43.

[21] *Cuentos* (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1974), pp.1-3.

[22] Pierre Castex, *Anthologie du conte fantastique français* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1947), pp.147-153.

[23] *Les chefs-d'oeuvre de la littérature fantastique*, p.31.

[24] *Les chefs-d'oeuvre de la littérature fantastique*, p.33.

[25] Howard Phillips Lovecraft, *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), p.15.

[26] *The Short Fiction of Edgar Allan Poe* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1977), p.139.

[27] *Contes fantastiques complets*, pp.89-95.

[28] *Contes fantastiques complets*, pp.169-176.

[29] Second version, *Contes fantastiques complets*, pp.281-308.

[30] *The Turn of the Screw and Other Short Novels* (New York: New American Library, 1962), pp.291-403. We would like to stress that there are many interpretations of this work,and that we are only considering one perspecti

[31] *Les chefs-d'oeuvre de la littérature fantastique*, p.30.

[32] *El centro del infierno*, pp.29-33.

[33] *El centro del infierno*, pp.61-70.

[34] *Le Récit fantastique*, p.184.

[35] *Cien años de soledad*, pp.192-193. We have quoted the passage in Note 11 of Chapter 2.

[36] *Los días de la noche* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1970), pp.26-35.

[37] *Los días de la noche*, pp.45-52.

[38] *Bestiario*, pp.117-137.

[39] *Hombres de maíz*, p.638.

CONCLUSION

[1] *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, p.89.

[2] *Anthologie du fantastique*, Vol. 1, p.22.

[3] "Trois apparitions du Horla", *Poétique*, 24 (1975), p.447.

[4] Bellemin-Noël, "Notes sur le fantastique", p.17.

[5] "Notes sur le fantastique", p.5.

[6] Magische Wirklichkeitsauffassung im hispanoamerikanischen Roman des 20. Jahrhunderts (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1976), p.36.

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